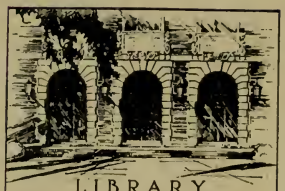
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MRS. CLEVELAND,

AND

THE ST. CLAIRS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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MRS. CLEVELAND,

AND

THE ST. CLAIRS,

&c.

One of the amusements of idleness is reading without the fatigue of close attention, and the world, therefore, swarms with writers whose wish is not to be studied but to be read."

DR. JOHNSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.

1836.

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MRS. CLEVELAND.

I really think there is no such good reason for living to seventy as curiosity.

Dr. Arbuthnot to Dr. Swift.

MRS. CLEVELAND.

CHAPTER I.

A CLUB.

CONTRARY to the approved maxim of most story-tellers, I beg to premise that I am not the hero of mine. My very name itself would be fatal to all interest, perhaps to all perusal, and certainly to all profit. The private history of Matthew Morland no one would care to penetrate: the announcement of it even is sufficient to damp the curiosity of others, though happily not that of him who bears it, for it is that very curiosity which gives rise to the following tale.

From whence I derived my origin, either as regards parents or country, I tell not; nor where I was educated, if I received any education at all; nor even how it happened that, in the spring of

the year 18—, I found myself (no very extraordinary circumstance) in London. The only wonder of my residence there was my being in almost as complete solitude as if in the deserts of Arabia; yet I was no misanthrope, no second Stranger: (alas! Paul Pry, I fear, is much more my prototype.) I had done nothing to forfeit my place in society, which, I will so far inform my readers, was that of a gentleman,—at least in 18— such was the case; and I was not ignorant of, or unused to communicate with men. Nevertheless, I stood in London alone and unfriended. If obliged to submit to the last, I determined not to endure the first; so I sought society. Whether from taste or necessity I shall not say, but amongst other haunts I frequented a club. Such haunts being usually both fashionable and agreeable, this circumstance would speak somewhat favourably of my appearance, manner, and station in society; but, gentle reader, be not too hasty in your decisions. I have already said that I had no acquaintance in London; the club therefore which I frequented could not be the most *recherché*, nor the society in it the most select. Still it *was* society; and human nature (the only book I cared

to study) was there to be read as well as at White's or the Traveller's.

The club I frequented was not one of saints. Cards and even dice were allowed; bets were not unfrequent; and large sums were lost, regained, and lost again, ere the crowing of the cock had dispersed the fair or foul assembly. Why I was there, I shall not say; but whatever my object, it was not so engrossing but that I well marked every individual around me,—and, to do my associates justice, a more ill-looking set I never met with. Extreme good looks might have been dispensed with; but it was the total absence of — dare I write it? all that denoted openness or honesty, benevolence or high-mindedness, that made me pronounce my company as I have done—an ill-looking set; and, to own the truth, I let them off easy in saying no more of their personal appearance.

Whether I was a contrast to, or a fitting companion for, the members of —— Club, my reader may judge as seemeth him best. Whatever *I* was, one person was an exception to the common herd in —— Street; and whether morally better or worse, Cleveland was so singu-

larly handsome, that by mere good looks he seemed to claim a superiority over those with whom, in other respects, he was perhaps on a par. Deeply as every one else was engrossed by play, Cleveland seemed positively engulphed by it. With an air of fashion and breeding which it was next to impossible he could have assumed without associating with those of a similar stamp, he yet let no word of courtesy pass his lips beyond what was absolutely necessary. His deportment spoke gentility—not his tongue. All that he did was in the way of business: and a desperate business it appeared! He played and he lost; he doubled his stake and lost again; still he played on, and it was ever—"Lost, lost, lost!"

Every evening of his arrival, were a dozen different palms extended towards him, not in the way of friendly greeting, but as the greeting of creditors. Rarely was the transfer on the opposite account. It was with a reckless smile that Cleveland resigned the contents of his pocket-book and purse into the hands of his greedy companions; and with a look of contempt he

would turn from witnessing the migration of his former property into the pockets of his companions.

Why did this man play? I inquired of myself. Was it for gain or pleasure? I knew not; but far be it from me to say I cared not. No daughter of Eve was ever infected with half the curiosity of me, a son of Adam. I liked to know people's histories, not, according to some tastes, so as to ascertain the day, hour, and year of their birth, the number of their children, and extent of their income, but for the gratification which consisted in the study of their character. I liked to read the minds of men, women, and even children, and to compare the different ills which flesh is heir to, for we are all wretched! The rich, the poor, the wise, the foolish, the young and old, are all in their heart of hearts unhappy, perhaps miserable! How I like that expression, heart of hearts; for there *are* secrets even to oneself. The heart dares not confess to its own bitterness, its own wickedness, its own tenderness or hardness; it dares not *confess*, but it is not *ignorant!*

To return to Cleveland. He won money of

me — I offered to double our stake — he won again—I wished to continue,—Cleveland told me I was wrong.

" You are in a vein of bad luck," he said; " you should relinquish play for a time; another day I will give you your revenge."

" Why do you not stop then? for I am well aware your winning is a rare occurrence."

" I am an old hand, and cannot exist without play: I would rather lose than not play at all."

" You pay dearly for your amusement," I answered. (Cleveland coloured.)

" I pay the price we all do."

" No, not all—I have won in my time."

" Ah!" said Cleveland, looking hard at me; " then you are accustomed to play?"

" Certainly; why should you imagine otherwise?"

Cleveland laughed. " From—from your inferiority I had the presumption to feel you were an easy prey; and," lowering his voice, " there are enough of plunderers in the world, without my lending a helping hand in the pillage."

" There are, are there?" I replied, assuming a vacant air. " I rejoice that you know your com-

pany. It is a knowledge that I am always striving to attain. In play," I added with a confidential look, "it is everything."

"That is, as far as play goes," said Cleveland: "in other respects, it matters not if your *compagnons de jeu* are bad or good, moral or immoral, high or low,—I had almost said, rich or poor; I care not even to know the names of those I play with—I never heard yours."

"Nor I yours," I answered; for a suspicion had arisen in my mind during our conversation that Cleveland was a *nom de guerre*. I looked hard at my friend, who rather confirmed my opinion by the heightened colour which mounted to his cheeks. "Perhaps not," said he: "in this place I am not anxious to hear it repeated."

"Then my suspicions are correct."

"Whom do you take me for?"

"Not for what you seem."

"I thank you for the compliment; for were I what I here seem," and Cleveland shuddered, "I should be the vilest reptile that ever crawled the earth."

"Why do you frequent this place, then?"

This was a more pointed question than I usually

put in the pursuit of my object—*curiosity*. It did not answer; which was generally the case. Cleveland started, and rather shortly asked, "Why do you?"

"For gain," I replied evasively. Cleveland understood me in the monied sense.

"Well, I hope you may not suffer as I have done; for I begin to think it is no joke. But," said Cleveland partly to himself; "luck will turn some day; I shall have every sous back again, —the Jews all paid, and, and . . . . . then I will play no more."

"What will you do without your amusement?" I demanded. Cleveland smiled, but his lips quivered. "One must pay for one's pleasure," I continued, "so let us have a little *écarté*."

We sat down, and Cleveland won. He looked a little hard at me, as I was, to use a familiar phrase, booking up.

"You know so little of *écarté*, that I feel we should not play together,—or, at least, not play even."

"That is my affair," I replied; "and if I choose to throw away my money, why are you to

prevent me? And moreover, let me tell you, the pity which proceeds from a feeling of superiority is very difficult to be endured. You may condole with me, if you please, upon my bad luck, but not on my bad head."

"Well, I shall be more discreet another time."

"And I will be equally so with regard to you."

"Thank you," said Cleveland; "I would not for worlds it were known that I frequented this inf— this place, this den of . . . . . *honest men.*"

In all my future visits to —— Street, my first object was to observe Cleveland. Night after night did his anxious handsome countenance present itself to my view, distorted by the hateful passions of a gamester; for every expression in that pursuit is equally odious, and I know not if triumph be not the worst of all.

Cleveland continued to lose, and continued to play, with all the old nursery adages in his mouth, of "Luck will turn,"—"Every dog has its day," —"When things get to the worst, they mend."

Between him and myself a tolerably good understanding seemed to have taken place. I in-

dulged his anxiety not to profit by my bad play, in resigning myself to a certain Captain Jones, with large whiskers and green spectacles, whenever I wished to win or lose a few pounds at *écarté*. The captain was dumb excepting as regarded the game, and, I verily believe, knew no words of his mother tongue but those which related to cards.

But I beg pardon of my readers for having detained them so long in —— Street; a place, I trust, they know nothing about. In my next chapter, I will introduce them to a different scene, though, after all, not a hundred miles from that in which this has been laid.

CHAPTER II

A MASK

During my childhood I possessed the prettiest playfellow, or rather plaything, for I was a few years her senior, ever boy was blessed with: and this playfellow or plaything grew up into a beautiful woman, and became the truest friend ever granted to man. The silence I practise as regards my own history, must close my lips as to any particulars of yours, my Kate! But you know the gratitude I feel, and ever shall feel whilst life exists, towards her to whom I owe, in some measure, fortune and fame! Thank God, the storms of life have touched you with a gentle hand, whilst the companion of your childhood has been tossed to and fro amidst the shoals and rocks of a troubled existence. You have dwelt secure from the tempest's roar, have sailed but on

tranquil seas, have anchored in security and slept in peace, happy Kate — and good as happy!

It was about the time that my appetite was somewhat palled by the study of human nature in —— Street, when this beloved friend very conveniently arrived in London to draw me from thence into her own society in Grosvenor Square. Her arrival was a diversion very much in my favour. Amiable in herself, she was affectionate and kind to me. Her house was agreeable, and as much frequented as any house in London: she had regular "at-homes," besides frequent dinner parties, to all of which I had a general invitation. As my cousin (for Kate bore that affinity to me) was, though no longer young, a person of distinction even amongst the most distinguished, I had a fertile field, in her house, as to objects of curiosity, of which I was most willing to avail myself. I was very soon *au fait* as to the exterior of all the fine gentlemen and fine ladies about town, and of a portion also of an inferior grade, mixed up with a sprinkling of heroes, politicians, authors, and orators, who formed my relative's society.

So quick was my eyesight, and so inquisitive

my observation, that in a few evenings I had the wardrobes of most of my cousin's female friends by heart. I had discovered Lady Arabella's predilection for a doorway, in aid of her passion for flirting; and for the same reason, though by different means, Lady Scrayford's preference to a retired sofa. I was quite aware of Mrs. T——'s determination to catch Lord C—— for her plain daughter, and the probability of her success in his anxiety to fly from Lady P——'s handsome one, whom all the world had given him for a wife. Many more things I saw and heard, and understood or misunderstood, which I need not be at the trouble of repeating.

It so happened, that just before my cousin's arrival in town, and my consequent *début* in fashionable society, a masked ball had taken place, the fame of which was still the theme of discourse. One evening, as I stood in my cousin's well-filled and well-lighted drawing-rooms, I heard all around me remarks concerning the fête in question. "I was so amused." — "I was so bored." — "Who was the Swiss on the friar's arm?" — "How divine Lady A—— was as Nice!" — "Who was the jockey making such

play with Petrarch's Laura?" — "*But who was the Turk?*" Now the last inquiry, though apparently as indifferent as any of the former, was uttered in a perfectly different tone; and moreover, it was a question every one asked and no one answered. My curiosity was all alive, but so was that of all the world. "Who was the Turk?" exclaimed every one; I joined in the cry, and screamed as loud as the loudest, "Who was the Turk?" — "I cannot bear to think of that odious Turk," said a lady standing near me: "but yet he is ever in my mind. He has rendered me suspicious of all the world, and made me positively shun all my dearest friends; for who but a trusted friend," continued the unfortunate Lady Alicia, shuddering, "could have told me all he uttered?"

"Why do you say *he?*" said the person she addressed: "the Turk was a woman."

"A woman! How do you know? Is she discovered?"

"Not that I am aware of; but the hand, though disguised in a man's glove, was that of a woman."

"It matters little of which sex, as regards her

discourse—it only adds somewhat to the difficulty of discovery," sighed Lady Alicia.

"My firm belief is, that she was a French *femme de chambre*."

"Say not so, for the love of Heaven!" screamed Lady Alicia. "The idea is too horrid! To think that one's secret feelings should be known or penetrated by one who made a confidante of her waiting-woman!"

"It might have been your own maid, well acquainted with your secrets through the medium of your letters."

"Oh, no. The Turk was well informed, knew several languages, was acquainted with every one, and, if it is an honour to have your misery shared by a minister of state, tormented Lord B—— quite as much as myself."

"It was precisely that conversation with Lord B—— which decided in my mind the sex of the Turk. No man, even in mask, could have ventured on such bitter taunts as his lordship had to endure at the Turk's hands. As a lover or minister he was equally and unsparingly attacked."

"The only person well off," said Lady Alicia,

"was Mrs. Cleveland." (The name made me start.) "She was obliged to give up the masquerade on account of the illness of her aunt. I wish that my aunt would have fallen ill, or died rather than I should have gone to that odious masquerade."

"You excite my curiosity; why not gratify it, Lady Alicia? What did the Turk say to you?"

"As if it were not bad enough to be in his or her detested hands, without placing myself in yours also! No; I will profit by the lesson the masquerade has taught me, and become prudent. Caution shall be my motto in future. I shall take good care not to put another in possession of the power of tormenting me, which this Turk has become the master of," answered Lady Alicia.

"The Turk, I would lay my life, is the subject of your conversation," said an elderly man, approaching the pair whose conversation I had overheard.

"Yes," said the lady;" I am infatuated by the subject."

"The Turk rather amused me; he said something bitter of every friend I have in the world,

and prognosticated evil to them all—but he did not abuse me personally."

"You were far more fortunate than myself."

"Mrs. Cleveland is the only one who can be called fortunate in that respect; for she was not at the ball, and is the only gay-looking person here—for her mind has escaped being tormented."

Which is Mrs. Cleveland? thought I. Following, however, the direction of Lady Alicia's eye, I decided that an extremely handsome woman, very well dressed, talking and laughing gaily with two or three other persons, was her.

"If she has any feeling, however," said Lady Alicia, "she might sympathise with her friends, and especially with *one* person, who, it is said, writhed with agony under the infliction of the Turk's discourse."

"Ah! you mean Willoughby; I heard something of the kind."

"For a short time people suspected that the Turk was Mrs. Cleveland herself; but that surmise was soon set at rest by the attack on Willoughby."

"It never could be Mrs. Cleveland, for she is the best-natured creature that exists."

"I verily believe that you say no more than the truth; nevertheless, if she were otherwise, if her tongue were venomous as that of the asp, Willoughby would be secure from its bitterness. Odious as he may be to others, with her he bears a charmed life."

"To own the truth, the mystery of the Turk I do not consider so great as the mystery of that *liaison*. It is positive infatuation: a woman like Mrs. Cleveland—fashionable, beautiful, high-born, and rich,—to allow the attentions of such a man as Willoughby,—to enlist him as her *cavaliere servente*, in preference to the first and finest of our London men, is quite inexplicable," said the elderly gentleman.

"Perhaps it is her husband's choice."

"Oh! poor Horace! I do not believe that he knows such a thing exists as a *cavaliere*, in any form; much less does he dream of one as an attendant on his wife."

"It is a very wicked world that allows such things!"

"My dear Lady Alicia, since when have you become so moral?"

"Since the masquerade. The Turk, as an an-

tidote to the severity of her language, wound up by some advice which I mean to profit by; so take care, Mr. Devon, how you behave next autumn under my roof, when you come pheasant-shooting."

Lady Alicia moved away, and shortly afterwards I returned home, with my head full of the Turk, Mrs. Cleveland, and Mr. Willoughby. My curiosity was aroused, and I was determined to solve the mystery which hung over those persons: what their intimate friends could not discover, I resolved to elucidate.

I dined frequently at my cousin's. One day, I had the pleasure of hearing on my arrival that Mrs. Cleveland, of whom I was dying to see more, was expected. Like all other anxiously expected pleasures, it was slow in being realised, and a good hour elapsed in waiting her appearance, —an hour of *ennui*, hunger, and ill-humour, all veiled beneath bland smiles, suppressed yawns, efforts to amuse or appear amused; and, what was worse, though not uncommon in worldly matters, the most virtuous were the worst used; for those who had arrived the earliest, and were consequently the best behaved, had the longer to wait,

and the greater *ennui* to endure. Our dresses too began to suffer. My well-starched neckcloth I felt gradually give way; my French gloves began to betray symptoms of what are called London *blacks*, in turning and returning some fifty times a set of prints scattered on the table, and the corkscrew ringlets of two young ladies were becoming each moment less deserving the name.

At length, however, the Cleveland carriage flew up to the door. Such is the weakness of human nature,—I mean my nature,—that trifles light as air have often made a greater impression upon my mind than matters of importance. The pages of Hume's History were read and forgotten, whilst the Vicar of Wakefield is as fresh in my mind as though I had only just laid the book from my hand. The impression of foreign scenes of grandeur, such as Vesuvius, Niagara, and the Andes, have long vanished from my mind; but I still remember the most common and uninteresting scenes in my own country, especially if connected with my youth. People of no note will obtrude their insignificant features into my day-dreams, (for I am a great dreamer,)

whilst it is in vain that I attempt to bring to my recollection the forms of—— but I will not mention names, for fear of betraying my age, which I am as desirous of concealing as was ever poor maiden of forty. In matters of less moment, this fault, or misfortune, was even more evident. And to show to what this digression tends, I have still in my mind every fold in the scarlet cachemire which encircled Mrs. Cleveland's head when she at length entered, and the exact fall of her black velvet gown.

She looked beautiful,—positively transcendent. She entered the room alone with a hasty step; which suddenly checking, she cast an imploring look, as she viewed the assemblage of bored and hungry people around, as if to beseech them to judge leniently of her tardiness.

"Indeed, indeed, it is not my fault!" she exclaimed.

"Cleveland's, I suppose, whom I am sorry not to see with you," said my cousin's husband, advancing to meet her.

"Oh, no! he is never in fault; the House of Commons is to blame."

"What do I hear?" said a stately M.P.

turning his full front towards Mrs. Cleveland; "what business is there?—*I* was not aware of any."

"Nor I either," answered Mrs. Cleveland, "till my lord and master sent me word there was, after having kept me waiting half an hour yawning over the embers of my dressing-room fire."

"It must be private business," said the M.P.

"Very private, I suspect," muttered the cynical poet S——, who stood beside me.

"Why so?" I inquired, always desirous to obtain information.

"My words were for those who can best understand them;" was the reply in a sharp accent. Then approaching Mrs. Cleveland, he said—"Where may the fair Turk have dined?"

Mrs. Cleveland gave a short quick start, and the colour mounted to her cheeks as she cast a glance of inquiry at him who had addressed her —"Why the Turk?"

"Why that turban? But I again ask, where have you dined?"

Mrs. Cleveland smiled; her complexion resumed its natural hue. "Oh, spare me your rail-

lery; I am as hungry as you are, and as angry too."

"I will spare; but I will not pity. You know you encourage Cleveland's absence in order to go about alone. You know how you hate dependance, even on a husband. You know——"

"I know that dinner is ready—that you intend to take me down to it—that I intend you should not; all this I know; so come, Mr. Devon, give me your arm to the dining-room."

"You will be lampooned for declining," said Devon.

"I did not decline; but I have no fear of any one's satire.—I am too innocent."

Mr. Devon and the poet exchanged glances. Why did they exchange glances? thought I,—why did Mrs. Cleveland start when accosted as a Turk?—why was there a look of incredulity on every one's face when her husband's absence was mentioned as the cause of her being late? Mrs. Cleveland was seated some way from me at the table; but I could well observe the animation of her countenance, though the brilliancy of her wit was lost to me. And perhaps, after all, if I could write down what she uttered, it would lack her manner,

her silver-toned voice, and, moreover, that happy tact which made her conversation so well suit the time, persons, and place; none of which could be given with her repartees and lively anecdotes. It is well, therefore, for my heroine and my readers, that I am necessitated to be silent.

The dinner was long; the after-dinner doubly so: it was nearly twelve when we left the dining-room. I seized my hat, and to breathe a purer air than that combined atmosphere of the fumes of meat, lamps, company, servants, and wine, I sauntered down South Audley Street; and not having been there for some time, I resolved to see what was going on at the club in —— Street. The first object that I saw upon entering the room was Cleveland. He appeared rather better satisfied than usual, and on approaching him, I observed (a very rare occurrence) a melancholy countenance in his adversary. Cleveland had been winning, and whilst I stood over him he won considerably. The game being finished, he moved from the table, and observing me, said gaily, as he placed the notes in his pocket:—

"Why, how smart we are to-night! Whence come you in that lovely waistcoat?"

"I have been dining with a large party."

"And had you any fair ladies to take note of your attire?"

"There were several very pretty women; one beautiful—a namesake of yours."

"Ah! Mrs. Cleveland; she is beautiful."

"Was it to pass as her relation that you assumed your present name?

"No; I believe she must have taken it out of compliment to me; at least, I had possession of it long before her marriage, when she was still the happy Miss Clairfield."

"What sort of a man is her husband?"

"Did you not see him at dinner?"

"No; he was detained at the House of Commons."

"He is a foolish sort of a fellow, whom she had the weakness to love and marry, and whom people tolerate for her sake, and for no merit of his own."

"She seems very popular. And this Willoughby, whom people talk of with her ——"

"Whom people what?" inquired Cleveland fiercely.

"Why, do not people call him her ——, lover I suppose I must designate him. In Italy the term is *cavaliere servente*."

Cleveland seemed hardly to hear the last word I uttered; he had flown to a card-table to accept a bet which had been offered; he won—thrusting his gains into his pocket, he hastily quitted the room.

It was the only night I had ever seen him retire before myself. I observed several of the company exchange glances.

"This will never do, Clevy, to decamp with our money," muttered one.

"I will make him refund to-morrow," said another.

"He has still great credit with the Jews, though his estate is entailed," observed a third.

CHAPTER III.

A SERMON.

I DO not neglect the church-service on the Sabbath. On the following Sunday morning I sallied forth at about five minutes before eleven, with my prayer-book in my pocket, and a new pair of French kid-gloves on my hands. Mingling with the throng, I entered a well-known church in my neighbourhood. Certain printed papers which there met my eye, distributed in every pew, gave me no small inclination to retrace my steps.

"A charity sermon again!" I groaned; "the sixth I have heard out of nine Sundays that I have been in London." This eternal tax during the London season is a positive moral evil, both upon preachers and their audience. I speak not as regards gold, for I never give upon such occasions,

and for fear I should be seduced into doing my alms before men, I invariably lock up my purse on a Sunday. If every one was as careful to conceal that mammon of unrighteousness from profaning with its guilty look the holiest day in the week, much misery might be avoided; and although charity sermons might suffer, yet publicans and sinners would not raise their heads so high. We should have fewer murders, thefts, and domestic feuds; those crimes gendered on the sabbath-day through the medium of ardent spirits procured by a week's earnings would be cut off from the list of atrocities, the description of which pollute the pages of our daily press, and sicken the hearts of the good to hear of. The evil of charity sermons is, that though they do no harm, yet they fill up time which might be much better employed. They take possession of more than their share of that trifling space which is devoted to the expounding the Scriptures to the ignorant, (and we are all more or less ignorant),—to pouring balm into the wounds of the unfortunate—to rousing the wicked—to the humiliation of the proud, the upholding of the meek and humble, and to the general edification of all by a judicious reproba-

tion of the most crying sins or follies of the day; which, in all probability, the great portion of the congregation, good as they may be, are not good enough to be exempt from, should their age and opportunities prove convenient.

With such feelings as regards charity sermons, it may be supposed that I heard with no small degree of impatience the text—"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"—I was determined to pay no attention; and if by accident some of the discourse was forced upon my hearing, I resolved to blame. But, however, I was convinced that I knew the sermon by heart, with all its threatenings, hopes, and promises of reward or punishment hereafter, offered to us according to our behaviour as regarded this particular charity; and I looked everywhere but at the preacher, and thought of every virtue but alms-giving.

The sermon, notwithstanding my inattention, made progress, and, spite of the preacher having no book, flowed currently on. In the same manner that I had often found myself absent in mind, I suddenly discovered that I was very attentive, and that many a better discourse than this I had

listened to with a perfectly vacant understanding. As the preacher inculcated not the act of giving, but the giving wisely, it was to the use, and not the abuse of riches, that he attempted to draw the minds of his hearers. He combated the indolent notion that spending money is charity; that as long as you do not hoard, as long as you support large establishments of servants, are hospitable to your friends in town, to your neighbours in the country, and, through the hands of a dependant, bestow annual donations to the poor of your parish, you are heaping up for yourself treasures in heaven. "That such good deeds," continued the preacher, "may plead in mitigation of your sins, we may readily hope and trust. So far a part of your wealth has been well bestowed: but I pronounce that it will be a trifling balance in your favour, when, on the other hand, appears the fearful catalogue of misused talents, power, wealth, and time. Then will appear on the list, establishment of servants, numerous beyond your wants, living in idleness, luxury, and immorality. Such, when they accompany you into the country, are as a pestilential disease, spreading their noxious taint over haunts which, com-

pared to towns, are innocent and pure. Not that I mean to say the country is the abode of purity and innocence; but, comparatively speaking, they who dwell therein are better and happier, — better from ignorance of many vices, happier from having fewer wants. Poor as they may be, those around them are equally so. It is for the child of prosperity, in his annual visits to his castle, to rob them by his luxury of their best riches—ignorance of wealth. Under his roof they see the sleek spaniel of more importance than themselves, and the pampered menials, at first their envy from their manners and dress, though born as lowly as themselves, become at last their models, their tutors, and guides in vice and profaneness! Is not, I say, wealth in this child of prosperity's hands misused? Will he not, good as his general character may be, have to answer for it? I could continue the picture; but I know the impatience of many who hear me. Still I must obtrude a few words more.

"Who teach dishonesty to tradesmen?—the wealthy, for they care not to be imposed upon. Who encourage vice on the stage, at the banquet,

or, last and worst, the gaming-table?—the wealthy, I repeat, for they can afford to be amused; they like excitement, and can pay for their pleasures. Who dares to say they are wrong?—few people in this world. But there is a world to come; and, I repeat, by the laws of that world they will be tried and convicted,—convicted of the abuse of power, for wealth is power. Tremble, therefore, ye rich; 'for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for ye to enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

The sermon continued much in the same strain; it was a singular one, though not particularly judicious or instructive. The familiarity of the preacher's manner commanded more attention than his matter. The rich were the principal objects of his attack; he followed them to their homes, to their very chambers. He described the man of fortune as practising economy in his nursery and his wife's dress, in the education of his children, and in his charities, in order to allow him to have great entertainments, represent a county, have a large stud, or indulge his taste for play.

What more the preacher said, I know not; for at that moment I heard a sigh, almost amounting

to a groan, from a female at the other extremity of the pew in which I was seated. It made me start, and some other persons bend their heads towards her with astonishment. She was evidently crying bitterly; but I could not discover her features, from the handkerchief which she held to her face. A lady in the next pew gave me a bottle of salts, and motioned me to offer it to the afflicted or nervous female. I therefore drew towards her; the attention was not declined; and as she withdrew her handkerchief to thank me, I beheld Mrs. Cleveland!

The service was at length over; and Mrs. Cleveland, preparing to depart, drew a splendid cachemire around her. We left the pew together. At the church door were the tax-gatherers, in the persons of a marchioness and an earl. Mrs. Cleveland will assuredly give, from the effect the sermon had upon her, thought I; so my want of charity, if I wished to conceal it, will not be observed. Mrs. Cleveland walked boldly forward, and passed the marchioness' plate without bestowing alms. She approached the earl;— "Mrs. Cleveland, how are you?" I heard him say. "Very well, I am obliged to you," was

her reply, as she moved onwards without turning her head towards the plate, on which was a goodly store of gold and silver. Her carriage was at the door; I handed her into it; I saw her throw herself back, and again give free course to her emotion. "Very strange! Mrs. Cleveland gave nothing!" said the marchioness. "The sermon has been vainly addressed to her indeed," rejoined the earl opposite; "an heiress, and married into one of the richest families in England, to have nothing to bestow!" "Very strange!" said one or two persons near. "Everything about Mrs. Cleveland is strange," thought I; "but I will solve the mystery."

Pursuant to the system of espionage which I adopted with regard to Mrs. Cleveland, I worked my way from the *salons* of my cousin in Grosvenor-square, gradually into those of almost every person whom Mrs. Cleveland frequented. She went everywhere; to the opera, to Almack's, to —— House; to Lady A—'s, Mondays; Lady B—'s, Thursdays; and to all those countless varieties of suppers, dances, plays, breakfasts, dinners, and small parties, which make the season in London superior to the boasted carnivals of foreign lands.

Mr. Willoughby was everywhere also! The existence of that *liaison* was no secret to me, for I had ocular demonstration thereof; but, like all the world, was completely puzzled thereat. Of all men in the world, Willoughby seemed the least likely to be viewed with favourable eyes by a fair and fashionable female. It was not that he was precisely ill-favoured, but his countenance was harsh,—its best expression was that of a bandit, its worst that of the subtle Iago, or the malignant Shylock. If his character was not indifferent, it was unpopular; his manners were cold and repulsive; his conversation, though rising at times to the heights of learning and cleverness, was far from pleasing, and from such lips could not be instructive.

No one listened to him beyond what the necessary forms of civility required; every one but Mrs. Cleveland shrunk from the honour of being addressed by him. Happily, however, for the world at large, the talking mood was not often prevalent with him, for he was generally taciturn, gloomy, and unsocial: even at Mrs. Cleveland's side the rigidity of his features were seldom relaxed; and if removed from her, he would regard

her with the sternness of a tyrannic father, rather than with the tenderness of a lover.

Willoughby was a man of fortune and family; but, by the latter, contrary to the respect which in England is ever paid to wealth, he was regarded with something approaching to dislike or fear. The fault might be with him, with them, or with both; but his relations cared not for him; the younger spoke of him with indifference, the elder with dislike. Once I overheard a prudent mother checking the feelings of her child, who was his nephew, exclaim, "For heaven's sake, be cautious! I would rather infringe the laws of my country and trust to their mercy, than sin against Willoughby and trust to his." The boy laughed: his mother continued, "It was not by such means that his fortune was acquired."

Willoughby had not always been rich: he had succeeded by right to the property of a relation; and a more remote cousin had subsequently made him his heir, merely to disappoint a nephew whom he had educated, and who therefore, as a thing of course, expected to succeed to his uncle.

The old gentleman, that his power might be felt even in the grave, cut off his nephew, in

the arms of whom he died, with an annuity of two hundred pounds, and bequeathed ten thousand a year in the funds to George Willoughby, his cousin in the fifteenth degree, and whom, it was said, he had never seen. Oh! man, man, dressed in a little brief authority, no wonder angels are said to weep at thy fantastic tricks!

Willoughby was therefore rich; he was fortunate also in various speculations, and had increased his store, so that at the moment when I first saw him handing Mrs. Cleveland to her carriage down the Opera-house stairs, he was probably one of the wealthiest commoners in the land. Money made him powerful; it made him also selfish, haughty and presumptuous, and hated by all save Mrs. Cleveland! "That woman," I would exclaim, "must be the most odious of her sex, to bear with the society of such a man,—to suffer her character to be lightly spoken of for the sake of one who commands neither respect, admiration, nor affection. In spite of her beauty, I quite hate the woman; her mind must be perverted, her intellects weak, and her taste positively vitiated."

I have not concealed that I frequented what

is termed bad company, as well as that which is called good. The strict justice of the application of these adjectives, I have my doubts about; but in the present instance I make use of the terms according to their common acceptation. Besides these two, I also frequented other company — that of the unfortunate and poor. One family of the latter class, with whom I was acquainted, inhabited a small ill-furnished house near the Edgeware road. The family consisted of a father, mother, and three daughters (the eldest of whom was eighteen), besides two boys. Their name was Williams; their history briefly as follows:—Mr. Williams was a thriving tradesman; his wife had been a nursery governess in a nobleman's family. For many years fortune smiled on their business; they lived upon their gains, were happy and content. Suddenly a reverse took place; their customers fell off; they were forced to retrench; the girls' governess was parted with;—for, like too many in their station, they were desirous of bringing up their children to occupy a superior grade to themselves, which, if it is an error, is an amiable one. Their gig was given up, their footboy dismissed; but all

was of no use; for, on the death of his most intimate friend, a surgeon by profession, a man who had sat by his fire, drank of his cup, listened to his jokes, and had been the companion of twenty years, poor Williams received from the executors of the deceased a bill of two thousand four hundred pounds for, briefly, *medicine and attendance.** The charge was unanswerable; for the kind-hearted surgeon had, in the way of friendship, as poor Williams fairly imagined, physicked and prescribed for his family for twenty years, had brought the five Williamses into the world, and kept them in health when there. The result was inevitable: Williams was ruined, and became an inhabitant of the King's Bench prison. From the last direful place he was, however, emancipated by one who heard of his misfortunes: the voracious executors of the friendly surgeon were paid the full amount of their exorbitant demand; Williams was restored to his family, but his business was at an end; he retired to a small lodging in the neighbourhood of the Edgware-road, where, by the sale of the embroidery his daughters manufactured, he and his family contrived to exist.

* Fact.

His daughters were three well-looking, modest, and industrious girls; their pale and slender fingers were never at rest, call at what hour I might, morning or evening. The father was often out with his younger children, and the mother occupied with her domestic duties elsewhere; but the daughters were ever seated, for the advantage of light, by the parlour windows, too intent on their work to talk, and only acknowledging my presence by a slight bend of the head and a gentle smile. The eldest had a melancholy, absent air; but the second was of a more sprightly mood, and even at her work her thoughts seemed more lively than sad.

I often brought a book or the newspapers in my pocket, and read aloud to the poor girls to lighten their toil. Even to the youngest this was a decided source of gratification; and their needles appeared to fly with redoubled activity when listening to some interesting work of fiction, or the public news of the day. If, on my arrival, a book peeped from my pocket, smiles were on every countenance.

"I had despaired of finishing this coronet before dark," said the second girl one day on my entrance; "but now, as I am sure that you have 'Mans-

field Park' in your hand, it will be done without my thinking of it." As she spoke, she held up the finest of fine cambric handkerchiefs, in the corner of which she was embroidering the name "Amelia," surmounted by a coronet.

"That is delicate work indeed," said I, looking towards the cobweb displayed; "for whom are you working?"

"I suspect for Lady Amelia Tarleton; for you read in the paper to us that she was shortly to be married to some Earl, and great preparations were making for the important event."

"But why do you only suspect? how come you not to be certain?"

"Because, when Mrs. Smith gave us the order for embroidering three dozen pocket handkerchiefs, she did not say whom they were for; they were to be finished this evening, when she would send for them, and pay for them too; so pray read a little of that book, and my task will soon be finished."

I opened the book; but before I proceeded to read, I ventured to make some inquiries as to who was this Mrs. Smith.

"Oh! she is the best creature that ever was;

I do not know how she heard of us, but she gives us constant work, and pays us so well that my father says he cannot make out what profit she takes for herself. Till we knew her, our trade was a sad disheartening business; whatever we offered for sale at the shops was called old-fashioned, badly designed, indifferently executed; and we could obtain little more than the price of the muslin for what they afterwards sold at five times the sum. But, however, since Mrs. Smith found us, the case is very different; our labour is no longer in vain. She gets us patterns direct from Paris, gives us orders for everything, and pays as she receives the things."

"Mrs. Smith's must be a lucrative trade," I said, smiling. My little informer blushed.

"I do not know how she manages; but it is not for us to examine too deeply into what is of so much advantage to ourselves. But I must work, and not talk."

"And I must not talk, but read, I suppose," said I. The pretty Caroline nodded her decidedly well-shaped head as she turned to the embroidered coronet, and I began the second volume of "Mansfield Park." I read till dusk; the youngest

girl then went for candles, and the other two laying down their work, the eldest observed,

"I wonder whether Mrs. Smith will come herself for the work?"

"I fear not," said the sister; "it will be too late; she will send that horrid Miss Willes instead, I am sure."

"I cannot endure her, she is so fine."

"She must spend a fortune on her dress. Did you observe, the last time she was here, her bracelets, rings, watch, and highly-scented pocket-handkerchief?"

"Yes, indeed; but it is her manner that I cannot endure; so grand and supercilious—so unlike Mrs. Smith,—I wonder they can be friends."

"Where does Mrs. Smith live?" I inquired.

"We do not know; she never told us."

"She has a shop, I suppose?"

"She never mentioned one. She is very kind in all manner of ways; and, when first she became acquainted with us, tried to persuade my father to let us set up a school; but he is grown timid from misfortune, and dared not embark in such a concern."

"Mrs. Smith may mean well," I replied

gravely; "but she had better attend to what she understands the value of—embroidery, and not give advice on other subjects. Your father was quite right not to attend to the recommendation of a person who, in all probability, has received no education herself."

"So one might suppose," answered the eldest; "but Mrs. Smith is not like most other people in her line. My mother says she is sure she has seen better days, for her manners are quite like those of some ladies she used to see when governess in Lord A——'s family. She has a soft melancholy air, just like my mother's."

"Poor thing! There is no state so pitiable as that of those who have to endure fallen fortunes in the decline of life."

"But why in the decline of life alone?" inquired Caroline laughing.

"Why? Did you not describe her as elderly?"

"Certainly not; she is young, and very pretty too."

I started, and casting an anxious glance at the three girls before me, an odious suspicion darted across my mind.

"Does Mrs. Smith often visit you?"

"Perhaps once a week."

"And makes herself agreeable?"

"Oh, delightful! She comes very often on a Sunday, because then she does not interrupt our work. She has been here besides on other days; but it has been to teach us some new stitches for embroidery, which she said it would be advantageous for us to know."

"She seems *very* kind to you. And so, she thinks you would do in a school? Is your mother present when she calls?"

"Sometimes. But last Sunday she was at church with the boys when Mrs. Smith came."

"Umph!" said I, as, taking up my hat, I walked towards the door. "I hope this Mrs. Smith means well by you, poor children; but I own I would rather have heard of her as old and ugly, and should like her still better without such a friend as you describe Miss Willes."

The girls stared at each other with surprise. I did not explain my meaning further, and determined to obtain, if possible, a sight of this Mrs. Smith herself, in order to judge with my own eyes as to her respectability.

It was not till some weeks after this conversation that an opportunity offered itself of so doing. I was walking one Sunday afternoon towards the Williams' house, when, within a few yards of their door, I saw hastily descend their steps a female in a plain Leghorn bonnet, and large plaid cloak of a peculiar pattern. She approached me quickly, and was past in a moment; but, in that moment, I caught a slight glimpse of a very pretty mouth, a long curl of raven black hair, and the prettiest foot imaginable, only to be rivalled by that of one person in the world that I knew.

"Mrs. Smith has just left you," said I, seating myself at Mrs. Williams' tea-table. "I regret not having arrived sooner, as then I might have had the pleasure of making her acquaintance."

"She did not remain many minutes, and seemed hurried and out of spirits—more so than usual."

"What is she sad about?" I inquired.

"I do not know," replied Mrs. Williams; "she has her cares, I suppose, as we all have; but she is a balm, I am sure, to the cares of others; without her, my poor girls might have toiled in vain at their work. Mrs. Smith is, however, sometimes gay; but even then a sigh will

escape her. If we observe upon it, she laughs, and says it is a habit she has, and then will try to speak gaily; but, with the smile on her lips, I have often traced the tear in her eye."

"When are you likely to see Mrs. Smith again?"

"Perhaps never!" said the eldest girl sorrowfully. "We are all wretched upon the subject. She has left us a vast deal of work to be executed, in the shape of pocket-books, pincushions, and *sachets*, which we are to make for a lady who is one of the patronesses of the approaching Hanover Square Bazaar, and who, being herself too idle or too unskilful to be able to fit up her own stall, is happy to employ others. Mrs. Smith has left us the address where we are to take the things when finished: here it is."

I took the paper, on which was written "The Countess of Arno, Berkeley Square." A suspicion entered my mind I had seen the hand-writing before, but I kept my thoughts to myself.

CHAPTER IV.

A WALK.

I CANNOT say my acquaintance with Mrs. Cleveland increased with a rapidity equal to my desires. I was not precisely her sort of man;—mind, I do not say what sort of man I was,—but the insects who basked in the sunshine of her favour were more gaudy than myself, more juvenile, and possibly gayer and better suited to buzz round so fair and blooming a flower. One important day, however, the fickle goddess Fortune smiled upon me, and at a late hour entering my cousin's dining-room, where the company were already seated at table, the vacant place left for me was, by some strange accident in the arrangement of the society, by Mrs. Cleveland!

On her other side was seated Lord O——, who by favour of his rank, not manners or intellect,

had the honour of escorting her to dinner. By one glance, as I seated myself, I saw a suppressed yawn on Mrs. Cleveland's face; which yawn was more openly avowed before I had swallowed my fish. With this tacit acknowledgment of her feelings as regarded Lord O——, and being invigorated by my first glass of wine, I made bold to address my fair neighbour on the subject of the charity sermon at which we had both assisted.

"I rather liked the discourse," said I, "and was half tempted by it to bestow, contrary to my judgment and practice, something in charity."

"Am I to understand then," replied Mrs. Cleveland with an evident air of surprise, "that you are uncharitable from principle?"

"No; I like charity at proper seasons, but I hate charity sermons—I abominate exhortation to favour extortion."

"It would certainly be better for the giver and the receiver if charity was spontaneous," she answered; "but as, in this evil world we inhabit, so many, even good people as they are called, and who are far too numerous I fear amongst the rich, require rousing to the performance of so positive a duty, I should be sorry to see charity sermons dis-

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couraged, or any other means, such as balls and bazaars, which the invention of man has discovered to cheat his fellow-mortals into kindness towards each other."

"I like the system of bazaars," I observed; "do you, Mrs. Cleveland?"

"I do not like or dislike them: I am glad that the hospitals and patriots should be so benefited. But that people wishing to be charitable should prefer the circuitous and ostentatious mode of making useless purchases of indifferent articles, sold by ladies playing at keeping-a-shop in a crowded room, to the simple method of sending a draft on their banker to the governors of the hospital, or patrons of the charity, is to me inexplicable; the fact, however, speaks for itself—a sum is made in one day at a bazaar which would not, without that stimulus, be collected perhaps in years: long may therefore bazaars flourish!"

"I must say," said I, "a good word for the articles sold. I saw this morning the prettiest assortment of fancy goods, which are to pass for proofs of Lady Arno's industry; a very harmless imposition, for without her name they would not sell, and without the aid of others they would not

be worth selling; and moreover, Lady Arno's charity is two-fold by that means."

"Where did you make the discovery of Lady Arno's subterfuge?"

"At a family of the name of Williams, where I also thought I had made other discoveries—I thought I found traces of yourself."

"Of me? I have worked, I beg to say, all my contributions myself," answered Mrs. Cleveland coldly.

"Well, but a certain Mrs. Smith—"

"Oh, talk to me not of Mrs. Smith, I beg, or of Mrs. any one. I am dying of hunger—put some chicken on my plate if you would save me from starvation, and let me eat in peace."

I was about obeying Mrs. Cleveland's orders, when a servant placed before her a plate, on which were some delicious-looking quails, with Mr. Willoughby's compliments. Mrs. Cleveland blushed, and darting a glance towards the donor, the expression of which, I trust, was not observed by Mr. Cleveland, who sat opposite, she commenced the discussion of the birds before her, dispensing with my services as both carver and talker. The remainder of the dinner she was

either silent, or engaged in trifling discourse with Lord O——.

As is common on the ladies quitting the dining-room, a pause ensued at the door-way on the subject of precedence. Mrs. Cleveland hung back, a baron's wife and an earl's widow and daughter being present. It was then that I took a very full look at certain very pretty feet which peeped from beneath her silk robe. Thinks I to myself (pardon the plagiarism) those are very like Mrs. Smith's feet. A few days after the above-mentioned dinner-party, my suspicions were further awakened, and, I may as well say, fully confirmed.

One morning I was walking in the Park. A lady and gentleman passed me: the lady was about Mrs. Cleveland's height, and had her air; the gentleman on whose arm she leant, (I must say rather familiarly,) was Mr. Willoughby. I have before mentioned that I possessed a description of intellect, which I can only designate by calling it *l'esprit des riens*, if such French or *esprit* be admissible; I could therefore swear to the plain cloak of a dark and rather peculiar plaid, and the texture of the Leghorn bonnet worn by the lady on Mr. Willoughby's arm, being the iden-

tical cloak and bonnet I had seen on the person of Mrs. Smith when she descended the steps of Mrs. Williams' house. The pair walked fast, but I kept close behind. They left Hyde Park by Stanhope-street gate; in Park-lane they separated; Mrs. Cleveland, for there was no doubt of its being her, turning down Hertford-street, where she lived. At the distance of perhaps three yards from her own door, she, suddenly making a halt, turned round, and her full dark eye fell directly upon me with an expression which I shall not readily forget—there was no mistaking the meaning it conveyed, any more than that a peculiarly high colour had risen to her cheeks. Albeit, though not addicted to the blushing mood, I felt in my sallow visage a slight tinge of red make itself visible. My conscience smote me for the system of espionage I had adopted towards her—a female with whose actions I had no concern, and with whom I was not even well acquainted. The pangs of conscience were also the more severe from the circumstance of being betrayed. As I met Mrs. Cleveland's steadfast gaze, I felt that my secret actions were better known to her than hers to me; she was annoyed, perhaps angry,

viewing me with contempt as well as dislike, and, alas ! deservedly so.

" Have you any commands with me, sir," she demanded, " that I have the honour of your escort to my own door ?"

" None, madam," I replied : " I followed you from a mistake which your dress led me into ; I thought you were a certain Mrs. Smith."

" Well, sir, I suppose there is nothing very extraordinary in the resemblance of dress ?"

" To resemble Mrs. Smith even in the pattern of a cloak cannot be injurious, madam, for she has been the benefactress of a most excellent but distressed family."

" If Mrs. Smith has been so, she is much to be envied."

" *If*," I replied : " who knows so well as Mrs. Cleveland that I speak the truth ?" And I could not resist a smile.

Mrs. Cleveland shook her head, but her gravity slightly relaxed. " Am I then mistaken ?" I said.

" You are mistaken in one essential point : Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Cleveland, for it is useless to keep up the mystery any longer with one who

appears so determined to solve it as yourself, has been only the humble instrument of good in the hands of others; and the good would probably have been done by a far more worthy character—by that good Samaritan who opened their prison doors, and gave them the roof they dwell under: he would not have waxed feeble in the good work; and, if others had not befriended them, I am convinced would have supported those whom his bounty has sheltered."

It was now my turn to blush in good earnest; and I did so the more, from the completely altered tone and manner of Mrs. Cleveland as she concluded her speech, which convinced me that all private rancour, as regarded myself, had given way on her part, when speaking of my assistance to others.

"Still," she continued, with a slight smile on her face, "I do not see why my choosing to visit the Williamses incognita could be any concern of yours."

"Pardon me there; curiosity is the only passion which still exists in a frame *blasé* to every other excitement. I am an idle prying old man, the greatest of whose pleasures is the solving charac-

ters. When I find in my way those who possess any, I like to analyse their minds by their conduct in private as well as public; to trace their wisdom or folly, and sometimes wickedness, in their pursuits and tastes, in their happiness and misery. In following my self-imposed *métier*, I have been—not for the first time, I fear—extremely impertinent, and I have to ask your pardon for my conduct of this morning." Mrs. Cleveland could scarcely forbear smiling as I spoke.

"Well, well," she said, "I forgive you; but I hope in future you will not exercise your talents as a police-officer upon me."

"I do not know—you are rather a mysterious personage in many respects," said I, recovering spirit by the encouragement of Mrs. Cleveland's smiles, and eager therefore to resume my old trick of curiosity.

"How am I more mysterious than most others?"

I hesitated. "Well," she continued, "I see you are not ready with your answer, and I have no time to wait whilst the mountain is in labour. But, before we part, let me explain one thing—

I am not charitable. Do you remember the charity sermon?"

"Certainly; you gave nothing, nor did I myself; yet you can be charitable,—so can I,—the Williamses prove the fact."

"As far as *you* are concerned, they prove it; but not as regards myself. I have done nothing for them, and the reason of my assuming a feigned name and humble attire was to prevent their expecting any assistance from me; assistance, which it is not in my power to afford, however I may have the wish."

"Not in your power!" I exclaimed, darting a look upwards to where a long balcony was filled with the most costly exotics, breathing perfume through the whole street. Mrs. Cleveland continued.

"*I state a fact;* and as I believe that, though curious, you are not a gossip—that it is to occupy your mind, and not your tongue, that you have constituted yourself 'inquisitor-general,'—I care not to tell you what, if you are any adept in your profession, you ought to have already known untold—I am poor!"

"Poor!" I exclaimed.

"What! is this news to *you*—the professed *curieux?*" said Mrs. Cleveland, laughing archly. "But there is the carriage: I must doff Mrs. Smith's attire, for that in which I must go to Lady Arno; so good morning! Should you pass this way at any time, I shall be happy to gratify your *curiosity* by a sight of the contents of my house, which I am now too much pressed for time to ask you to enter."

Mrs. Cleveland flew up the steps: the hall-door was opened by a porter in rich livery; two footmen in similar attire stood in the hall as their lady tripped lightly through it; the door was closed, and I turned my eye on the handsome equipage which now approached. Elegant beyond comparison was the Cleveland carriage—unmatched for beauty the greys which drew it, and unmatched for importance the man who drove them.

"I say, my man," casting from his elevated station a look of contempt upon me,—"I say, my man, make yourself useful, and touch that there bell, for these here cattle won't bear to be left a moment."

I humbly obeyed, and bent my steps again towards the Park, meditating upon the conversation of the morning, and upon Mrs. Cleveland's poverty!

My curiosity, of course, soon impelled me to profit by Mrs. Cleveland's permission to call upon her. I found her at home; which was better fortune than I expected from so fine a lady, at one o'clock in the day, and to a person in a spencer! Her house was as elegant as herself, and displayed at every turn equal proofs of taste as well as wealth: costly china, odoriferous plants, rich silks, mirrors, and pictures met my unwearied gaze, beautifully arranged in most becoming disorder through the spacious drawing-rooms leading to a small boudoir, fitted up as a Turkish tent, where Mrs. Cleveland passed her mornings. She was alone: her pretty foot rested upon a velvet cushion, and a volume, evidently of French manufacture, was in her hand; at her side was a small table, on which everything was in proportion small — inkstand, watch-seals, blotting-book, miniatures, trinkets, &c. were all of the diminutive race. Mrs. Cleveland smiled as I entered. She probably thought of my *curiosity*

—I thought of her *poverty!* "Poverty!" said I to myself: "because she has only two drawing-rooms, and Lady Finchley has five;—because she cannot afford to purchase such a mansion-house as that of Northumberland, and because her staircase is inferior to that of Chesterfield House, she dreams herself poor and a beggar!—too lowly to offer any of her wealth to the distressed Williamses—too just to give any thing but tears to a charity sermon!"

My visit was not very long, for we were interrupted by the entrance of a young man whose hollow cheeks (my passion is to *particularize*) were filled up by enormous whiskers—whose narrow chest was exposed to every blast through his cambric shirt—whose gilt spurs seemed to weigh down his slender legs, as did costly rings his slender fingers. This dandy entered with that enviable unconcern which is common to all the tribe: eyeing me and my spencer with ineffable contempt, he threw himself into an armchair, which he coolly pushed forwards between me and the fire. Mrs. Cleveland having vouchsafed a nod, a smile and a finger to the newcomer, seemed very well inclined to continue

her conversation with me: but I have a juvenile fault—I am shy; the little disturbance caused by the dandy's entrance gave me an opportunity of getting quietly out of a room which I was delighted to have entered, and from which the gentleman, and not the lady, seemed to expect my retreat.

CHAPTER V.

A DISCOVERY.

I MUST in this place make a confession, and acknowledge a fact, which perhaps may speak in my favour, and perhaps may be to my disadvantage, as a person of consistency, even as regards curiosity; for curiosity, which had hitherto been the cause of my prying, inquisitorial conduct towards Mrs. Cleveland, had given way, in a great measure, to honest and humble admiration.

My curiosity was not entirely removed, however, for there was still something about Mrs. Cleveland which might be termed mysterious; but the grand motive which guided my steps so often to her door, (and that was at the rate of five times in the week,) was to talk to her, to hear her gentle voice give utterance to the most amiable sentiments, and to see her who, the

evening before, had shone the most lively, agreeable coquette in the room, metamorphosed into the *bonne mère de famille*, running up the seams of her baby's frock, inspecting her accounts, or poring over the pages of some historian who, having had the misfortune of writing two hundred years before the Bonapartean era, is of course unreadable as regards the *erudite* of modern days, unless by some such singular mortal as Mrs. Cleveland or myself.

Mrs. Cleveland had a peculiar charm in my eyes; she could talk every sort of conversation; she was no more exclusive in her ideas than in her society; and I was very soon convinced that the common gossip of the day, notwithstanding the peculiar grace which she could throw over such materials, was the style least to her taste, and in which she shone to the least advantage, however much she was admired in it. I have known her, in the race of quizzing, beat all competitors round a dinner-table; I have seen her pass a whole evening in the discussion of a fancy costume, and yet the following morning I have heard her declare that she rather liked than otherwise the person whom she had probably annihi-

lated by her ridicule, and of all subjects, to talk of dress was the most boring to her.

" Then why quiz, or talk of dress, if you have no amusement therefrom ?" I inquired.

" Mind," said Mrs. Cleveland, smiling, " I did not say quizzing bored me — I hate myself for liking so odious a propensity ; — I bear no malice to any one, but I love to quiz. As to dress, that decidedly bores me to talk about : but whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well ; so in giving the best advice I could to the Bennet girls about the Polish dresses for Lady A——'s ball, I sacrificed taste to good-nature, and, as they happen to be plain, I fear to very little purpose. As to my listening with the patience of Job to poor dear Lady Arno's two hours' discussion of her Anne Boleyn cap, I love the woman so well that I would not thwart her inclinations in anything. She is not wise, but good ; her want of wisdom shows itself in having no other more decided taste or greater pleasure than dress, and her goodness of heart displays itself by her purse being opened more readily to the calls of charity than the temptations of the milliner ; and if there was a question about

assisting one of my poor protegées the Williames, or a fancy-dress, the last would be instantly sacrificed: happily, however, for the world and herself, she can manage both matters very conveniently. Talking on such matters, I must tell you she has taken the eldest Williams' girl as governess — and when they leave London, her little brother John, who is a puny child, is to accompany his sister. I think now you will not consider my evening as ill employed when passed in humouring the pardonable weakness of so good a soul as Lady Arno."

Every hour my admiration of Mrs. Cleveland increased; but still, as I have before stated, my curiosity was not satisfied as to certain mysterious points in her character and conduct. She was gay, but, I was convinced, unhappy; she had nothing to give in charity, though living in luxury and expense. She professed the strongest attachment to her husband, talked constantly of their early and continued affection for one another; yet I never found him in her drawing-room at home, and very rarely saw him with her abroad; whilst her *liaison* with Mr. Willoughby was, to say the least of it, of rather an equivocal

nature. Though good-natured, my suspicions nevertheless were strongly confirmed that she had acted the part of the Turk at the masked ball: then, though always in the world, she liked not dissipation; and though a fine lady, was not at all ill-informed as to that society which extended itself beyond the exclusive circle within which some of her friends intrenched themselves. Mrs. Cleveland really knew that the Fauxbourg St. Germain is not Paris, — nor Grosvenor Square, London! This knowledge she had contrived to pick up in her earlier years, with some other matters of a similar nature.

"You were early left an orphan then?" I said one day to Mrs. Cleveland.

"I was not sixteen."

"And at that age gained your wealth at the price of a parent's care?"

"Alas! my fortune came not to me from my poor father; and his care, — cruel necessity had obliged me to forego several years before his death. — I wonder," continued Mrs. Cleveland, "whether you ever saw my father."

"It is not very probable; he must have been

so much my junior, and I have lived so much abroad."

"But my father died in India, where, I have heard you say, you have been."

"In India!" I exclaimed; "that alters the case considerably. But excuse me, Mrs. Cleveland, — what was your father's name? I am ashamed to say that I am very ignorant on the subject of parentage, and beyond the fact of your being an heiress, never heard further of your ante-matrimonial days."

It was in a low, melancholy voice, Mrs. Cleveland pronounced her father's name.—"Colonel Clairfield."

"Clairfield!" I exclaimed; "I do remember now having heard so before, but it did not strike me then. Gracious powers! can you be the daughter of poor Clairfield; — he who died in ——"

"Who died in want and wretchedness," interrupted Mrs. Cleveland, with clasped hands and streaming eyes. "I know what you would say— whilst his daughter revels in wealth and luxury! Oh! if you could tell the tears I have shed on

my bed of down, thinking of that whereon he died, and the loathing, the hatred, with which I first viewed myself as an heiress, possessed of that wealth he would have so much enjoyed, and for want of a small portion of which—he died !—for I have been told that distress of mind at the ruinous state of his affairs preyed upon him, and accelerated his end. And my poor mother too ! she who had been brought up in luxury, of tender habits and delicate health, the tenderest of parents, was obliged to abandon her children and follow the cruel fortunes of a much-loved husband, and so fell an early victim to the climate of the East, added to the fatigues and roughness of a long passage."

" I have heard the sad tale from your father's lips ; some people thought that he never recovered her loss. I knew him not before he came out ; but from the period of our acquaintance, which was shortly after he landed, no smile ever passed his lips.

" My earliest impression was poverty connected with virtue ; so that, as I grew older," observed Mrs. Cleveland, " I began to consider them as inseparable as vice from wealth. I quite hated

the rich, and told Lady Harlowe, my maternal grandmother, as much, with whom I went to reside when my parents left England. She was a proud, cross, rich and unbending dame, who, without wisdom, beauty, or amiability, gained so complete an ascendency over her husband by the fears which her temper excited, that he left her, besides her jointure, a large landed property, which, added to what she afterwards inherited from an uncle, made her as wealthy as any widow in England. She lived therefore in splendour, and on our arrival to reside with her, sent her coach and four to meet my brother and myself at the last stage of our journey to her house. I shrank as I entered it, and was disgusted with everything that presented itself on my arrival,—the plate, the jewels, the servants, &c.; for well did I know, and most resolute was I not to forget, that my poor mother had repeatedly applied in vain to her own mother for assistance. Often and often had I seen "letters wet with the writer's tears" despatched to her callous parent; epistles which might have melted the hardest heart, and which I found afterwards carefully preserved amongst my grandmother's papers, with copies of her cruel answers!

All this did I know; as also that the offer to take charge of me and my brother was so arrogantly worded—the good fortune of my mother in being able to wash her hands of children whom she had had the impertinence to bring into the world so strongly insisted upon, that my indignant parents, forgetting their poverty and exile, were on the point of spurning with contempt the dowager's offer. But, alas! they were too poor to be able to indulge the dictates of virtuous indignation. In poverty, everything is a fault or a misfortune; what is virtue and pleasure in the rich, is vice and pain in their less wealthy brethren; and whilst generosity, taste, feeling, hospitality, education, and gentility increase the enjoyments and respectability of the rich, they add only to the sorrows, and perhaps to the faults, of the poor.

"Happily, I was not doomed to live entirely with my grandmother. My father's sister took charge of me for half the year. Mrs. Somers was not rich, but kind; she loved me as her own child, who was about my own age; and with her I was as happy as possible, though my aunt had no carriage and wore no jewels. Thank God, she is now in more prosperous circumstances! my

hateful wealth has requited in some manner the kindness she lavished upon me and my little brother."

"A brother!—you have one then?"

"In heaven," sighed Mrs. Cleveland; "he died of the scarlet fever at school. It is said that early death is a proof of Heaven's favour: I have no reason to consider his being snatched from this vale of tears otherwise than in mercy. He has been spared the misfortune of riches, which, by his death, and that of my grandmother, who left all her fortune to him, I became possessed of, and which have proved my torment—my scourge!" (Mrs. Cleveland stopped; the tears stood in her dark eyes—her hands were convulsively clasped;) "whilst the only satisfaction which my prosperity could have given me—the power of assisting my dear, dear father, his early death prevented. Never can I describe the bitterness of my disappointment, when, at the moment I was forming brilliant visions of future happiness, by bestowing on him my grandmother's wealth, of which I had then been a few months possessed, I heard he had died! amongst strangers, in poverty and exile, without

having heard of Lady Harlowe's death, or of his daughter's accession of fortune !"

" Your father's deathbed was not uncheered by the voice of friendship ; and though in Europe he might have had more tried and older friends, yet I know not that they could either have done more for him in his last moments, or have more warmly lamented his untimely fate, than did those who were comparatively strangers."

" One person most decidedly proved his kindness and friendship to my father," answered Mrs. Cleveland ; " but who that generous being was, I have in vain attempted to discover. My father died in debt, as you may have heard, perhaps. I wrote to the then Governor of Madras, to ascertain the amount, and pay it for me. The answer I received was, that, within one week of my father's death, every debt had been settled by some unknown friend : that he (the governor) had endeavoured to discover to whom I was indebted, that the money might be repaid him ; but his endeavours were totally fruitless. I have not yet relinquished all hope of being some day successful ; perhaps you yourself may aid me with your opinion on the subject. Who was there in

India at the time of my father's death, with power as well as inclination, to perform so generous a deed?"

"Could it be himself?" I inquired, nameing the Governor of Madras.

"Oh, no! he has not the money, whatever might be his inclination."

How long our conversation and speculations might have continued, I know not; but the entrance of Mr. Willoughby brought our discourse and my visit to an abrupt conclusion. He seemed surprised at seeing me; and Mrs. Cleveland, as I thought very unnecessarily, explained the circumstance of my being a friend of her father's as the reason of our acquaintance. Mr. Willoughby was so obliging as to appear satisfied with my credentials: I was well aware, however, that he would be better satisfied the less I presumed upon them by lengthening my visit, so I made my bow. As a reward, I suppose, for my discretion, I received a few days afterwards an invitation from him to dinner: to which dinner I went, and where I found, not, as I expected, Mrs. Cleveland, but twelve dull men, into the capacious bodies of whom Mr. Willoughby watch-

ed the gradual progress of his fish, flesh, fowl, champagne, claret, and ice, with a civil look of contempt on his countenance, which, joined to his colloquial powers being confined to the simple part of pressing us to the food, which he seemed to despise us for enjoying, effectually destroyed both my appetite and spirits. The absence of the last had no particular effect upon Mr. Willoughby or his society; but he evidently observed my abstemiousness with surprise, and almost displeasure. I could read in his countenance that he had invited us to eat; and not to fulfil his expectations, was, in his opinion, the height of impertinence.

As the daughter of Clairfield, my interest in Mrs. Cleveland had an additional impulse; and in paying her a now daily visit, I gratified myself, and, as she honestly told me, herself also. I felt as a father towards her, and determined to act as such should occasion require my so doing; and, in the mean time, to regard all around with a jealous eye—especially Willoughby, who seemed to have an influence over her, which I could not pay her so bad a compliment as to lend myself to the world's opinion by calling it love.

Mrs. Cleveland's aversion to wealth, and pity towards those who were in arrears of fortune's favours, was strongly marked in her marriage.

The instant she became an heiress, violent siege was laid to her heart by the Earl of Iceland, and his mother, the Dowager Countess. They carried on the attack with great vigour, receiving the support of Mrs. Somers, with whom the young heiress resided.

Lord Iceland was so steady, so quiet, so little talked of, so prudent, and so unlike his six younger brothers, that Mrs. Somers was quite sure her niece would like, love, marry, and be happy with him, the moment his august intentions of making her his wife were announced in due form. Great, therefore, was her surprise, when her lovely niece declared opinions very different from those of her aunt. She did not like, could not be happy with, and never would marry the Earl of Iceland. The fact is, Lord Iceland was selfish, narrow-minded, dull, ignorant and ugly: for what is a fine figure if it cannot relax from the positions of the dancing-master? what are fine eyes which express nothing but superciliousness? what is a handsome mouth whose smiles are sneers,—

whose wit, platitudes, which none would dare utter but a fool or a man of wealth? His lordship was therefore refused. Mrs. Somers was astonished, and rather sorry; Lady Iceland, astonished and very angry: both ladies, however, were totally unprepared for what was to follow.

Lord Iceland, in the pursuit of Miss Clairfield, had introduced to her acquaintance his third brother, Mr. Horace Cleveland. Perhaps his lordship was not aware that those offshoots of the human race are deemed of sufficient importance in the creation as to have a name assigned to them, to which honourable appellation his brother had a most peculiar claim; for of all the handsome, agreeable, extravagant, beggarly *detrimentals* in London, Horace Cleveland was the most extravagant, the most agreeable, the handsomest, and the poorest.

Mr. Cleveland being aware of the state of things as regarded his brother on his first introduction, did not harbour the dishonourable idea of cutting him out; on the contrary, he did everything he could to further his cause, and give a good impression of the family, by making himself, in a brotherly way, as agreeable as he possibly

could to Miss Clairfield. His endeavours were more successful than he expected; and when the result of the courtship arrived, and the Earl of Iceland was rejected, Mr. Horace Cleveland found a saving clause as to his acquaintance had been put in, by which he was given clearly to understand that the brotherly attentions of the beggarly detrimental were far from disagreeable to the lovely heiress, and not at all to be foregone with those of his elder brother.

Mr. Horace Cleveland took the hint, continued his attentions, proposed for himself, and was accepted. Lord Iceland was surprised, but not offended. Miss Clairfield had only ten thousand a year, whilst Miss Golding, whom he had begun to pay attention to, had fifteen thousand; and, moreover, Miss Golding's property joined his own, and she was a quiet, plain, simple-minded girl, much more likely to insure a man's felicity in marriage. Lady Iceland was precisely of the same opinion as her first-born, and expressed her feelings as is shown in the following extract from one of her ladyship's epistolary effusions, which the occasion brought forth.

"To be sure I am the most fortunate mother

in the world. I only presumed to think of Miss Clairfield as Iceland's wife, little dreaming that his younger brother, without title or fortune, was to carry off the prize, leaving his elder brother to bestow his hand and honours upon Miss Golding, a much better match. She is much richer than Miss Clairfield, not near so gay, and being less handsome, is not so much talked of; and she has hardly a relation in the world."

Mrs. Somers did not partake of Lady Iceland's joy. She had a small sigh to explain away, as well she might, whenever the marriage was talked of, and a very faint smile of acquiescence when Miss Clairfield would talk to her of her favourite Horace Cleveland.

The sigh could not be caused by his poverty, for Miss Clairfield had wealth enough for both. The sigh could not be caused by himself, for no man was more popular; his temper was perfect, so were his manners, and he was more than sensible, for he was clever. Still Mrs. Somers heaved a gentle sigh whenever the marriage was discussed, and shed a torrent of tears when it took place.

"They must be happy," said her daughter

the evening it took place; "they are so young, so gay, so rich, so much in love, and so amiable: why do you therefore sigh so much, mamma? why do you weep?"

"God grant, my child, that I may never have as much cause in witnessing your nuptials!"

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE.

Trusting to the wise man's opinion, that there is a season for all things, I expected that with the close of that period which is called the London season, Mr. Willoughby's favour in Mrs. Cleveland's eyes would be cooled, if not cold; and that he would gracefuly retire from her presence to that of the grouse on the moors, or the yachters at Cowes, or to the anglers wherever they may resort, or to the Leamington or Cheltenham waters. My hopes and expectations were vain. Mr. Willoughby would adopt none of the diversions; he was fixed in London because Mrs. Cleveland was there; and, what was worse, as the stage was cleared, his assiduities became more glaring, his attentions from want of rivals more unceasing. The tread of their horses' feet, as they cantered

side by side through the empty streets, was known to my ears as familiarly as the postman's knocks at the door. I was sadly fidgety; the empty world talked louder than the full one, and that most worthy production the —— newspaper had a very lengthy paragraph, concocted in the most popular and moral manner, alluding to the *liaison*, in which she fared but ill. "This will never do," thought I; "I must speak to Mrs. Cleveland. I am her friend, I was her father's friend, and she shall be warned before it is too late!"

Little as Mr. Cleveland appeared in his lady's society, yet I could not fail to observe his total absence, and, with my natural turn for inquiry, I demanded of his wife "where he might be?"

"Which Mr. Cleveland do you mean?" was her answer to my inquiry after Mr. Cleveland.

"Your husband," said I; "I know no other."

"I was not aware that you knew him: he is at Paris."

"Paris! and what may be his business or pleasure there?"

"I forget what excuse he framed for the trip," replied Mrs. Cleveland, putting on a peculiar air of levity which was mortally offensive to me, spite

of my admiration. "Let me see: he wanted to visit his friend Beaumont; and besides, there is this new dancer; and his waistcoats were beginning to be old-fashioned, and I wanted a bonnet from Herbault's for Doncaster, and——"

"Fifty other equally cogent reasons," I interrupted Mrs. Cleveland, "which you need not give yourself the trouble to invent or remember. I am perfectly satisfied that the business must be of the utmost importance which could transport your husband from your side, and none but the most satisfactory reasons could reconcile you to his departure."

"I am very glad you have so just an idea of our matrimonial felicity," answered Mrs. Cleveland coolly.

"Mrs. Cleveland! Mrs. Cleveland!" I pronounced warmly, "do not pretend to misunderstand me: you must have observed how I lament the manner in which you and your husband live, and which I must conclude to be the secret cause of your grief,—a grief which you may attempt to veil with the mask of levity, but which, however blinded others may be, I have ever observed in silence and in sorrow."

"Am I unhappy?" and Mrs. Cleveland turned her full and brilliant, though tearless eyes, upon my face.

"Yes, when your feelings are not under the subjection of your spirit and spirits."

"You are perfectly right;" and Mrs. Cleveland turned her face towards the glass over the chimney, and began to arrange her glossy curls;—"you are perfectly right, and have penetrated me exactly."

"To penetrate is nothing; it is reformation I aspire to."

Mrs. Cleveland laughed. "No, no, pray do no such thing. I cannot part with my *feelings*, for they make me like myself, and my *spirits* others like me for; and as to my poor *spirit*, without it I should die—positively die! So pray let me escape the pruning-hook, or more properly the scalping-knife of reform. I am much better, bad as I may be, than if I was altered."

"Are you satisfied yourself in being what you are?" I inquired seriously; "do you truly think that you require no reform in your actions or your words?"

"As far as my powers will allow, I do my best

to act as I should do," replied Mrs. Cleveland earnestly, "God is my witness."

I shook my head—"My dear child! what are you dreaming of? Is the being estranged from your husband, upright conduct? Is—is—forgive me what I would say—is permitting the attentions of another man, the acting as you should do, as a woman, a wife, mother, and a Christian?"

"Whose attentions do I allow?" demanded Mrs. Cleveland, regarding me with surprise.

"Mr. Willoughby's," I answered firmly.

"Who accuses me besides yourself?"

"I do not accuse you,—it is the world. I believe no positive harm of you: you are only giddy and indiscreet, and do not accommodate yourself to your husband's tastes, by driving him from his home to Paris, and making that home almost the abode of Willoughby."

Mrs. Cleveland was silent; she did not seem angry, and, it struck me, appeared half inclined to laugh, could I have believed such levity in one so handsome and amiable as herself. "If I can make myself heard, I will," said I vehemently. "You know not the precipice on which you stand: Willoughby is clever, artful, and designing; your hus-

band's eyes may be closed at this moment, his ears may not yet have been assailed by the baneful breath of slander, which would tarnish your fair fame; but the time will come, when he will both hear and see; and then, my dear Mrs. Cleveland, how will your proud spirit brook his taunts, his accusations? — how will your feelings endure his ire, or, far more bitter, his misery? Before it is too late, think well what you are about; drive Willoughby from your presence, and dismiss him from your house; — let me entreat you for the sake of your children as well as your own."

No shadow of a smile again appeared on Mrs. Cleveland's face. Tears, honest genuine tears, fell from her lovely eyes in torrents, as she turned her face towards me.

"You will obey me, I see you will," I exclaimed, joyfully taking her hand between both of mine. Mrs. Cleveland's sobs redoubled. "Thank God!" I cried: "you will be happy yet; the thraldom which this Willoughby has thrown over your better feelings shall be broken; your husband will find his home such as it was when you were first united; your friends will no longer have to mingle a sigh for your weakness, with

their admiration of your virtues; and Willoughby, the odious Willoughby, will find his own level."

As I spoke, Mrs. Cleveland appeared to make an effort to command her feelings; which task, for it evidently was one, she accomplished. At length, and when I had ceased speaking, her tears were no longer visible.

"You are very kind to me, and I most sincerely thank you for your good intentions and your good wishes; but you must excuse me if I say *I cannot* act as you wish."

I started.

"No," continued Mrs. Cleveland, "Mr. Willoughby has been in some respects a friend to me; I cannot drive him from my presence without reason."

"Without reason!" I exclaimed, —"without reason? Is not your character a sufficient reason?"

"That might have held good a year ago; but having braved the world's opinion so long, what excuse can I now make to Mr. Willoughby for changing my conduct?"

"You acknowledge then, that you have been aware for twelve months of your character being

endangered by your intimacy with Willoughby?" Mrs. Cleveland blushed.

"Character, then, is of no estimation with you?" I added.

"Pardon me," said Mrs. Cleveland, proudly; "it is almost too highly esteemed. I am, to a fault, tenacious of the world's opinion, whatever my actions may declare. Of all odious beings, those, in my eyes, are the worst who, from weakness or wickedness, bid defiance to the opinions of society, and neglect every duty for the sake of attaching to themselves one under the assumed, if not real, character of a lover. I dislike such a woman, as much as I admire, or I might almost say envy, one like Lady ——, who, exalted in station, gay in society, beautiful and clever, and admired almost to adoration, has ever walked the waters of life as if possessed of a talisman to secure her from wreck or alarm. Once I hoped to have resembled her; but my dream is over, and the hope is annihilated. Instead of being a model, I am a beacon: instead of a friend to the poor, I am their enemy; instead of being to you an object of pride, as my poor father's child, I am one of pity—perhaps of scorn! Oh!" continued

Mrs. Cleveland, covering her face with her hands, "what have you not to answer for—Too much trusted — too fondly loved — too truly believed! That my most bitter lesson in the world's deceit should come from you, whom I regarded as perfection—to whom I gave my confidence, my heart, and my faith — and that you should have transformed me from the generous, open-hearted, confiding wife, into the wretch I am now, is agony indeed!"

I positively was thunderstruck, and looked at Mrs. Cleveland with almost as much alarm as pity. "She must be raving," I thought, "to be so infatuated with such a being as Willoughby—raving, absolutely raving mad." I could not answer, but only gazed with astonishment as, with her face buried in her handkerchief, she gave unbounded way to her tears.

It has been said that the hour of meals has a great effect upon our actions. It was not, however, the announcement of dinner, or even luncheon, which brought Mrs. Cleveland's and my conference to an abrupt conclusion; but the announcement of a visitor in the person of an elderly, formal, stupid-looking woman, going her regular

rounds of visitation to all on her visiting list. This old lady being seated, commenced a long oration on the subject of her misdemeanours as to calling.

"But, ma'am, I am sure you will excuse my remissness; I have had a terrible cold, the worst I ever had—something of an influenza, with considerable inflammation on the trachea. Doctor —— thought it the worst case of any this very unhealthy season. I was seized leaving Lady Hanover's, and when I got home, could hardly speak. The next morning my maid persuaded me to send for the doctor: I am not fond of doctors; but, however, Mr. West is not like the generality, and he insisted upon my sending for Doctor ——. I was obliged, therefore, to put myself into his hands, and for six weeks I have been following his prescriptions; and Mr. West says, if I had been in the country, he thinks it would have been a very serious case indeed."

As the good lady talked on, Mrs. Cleveland composed her shattered nerves, and at length was sufficiently herself to venture a smiling glance towards me, at the expense of her prosing visitor. She then very quietly drew towards her various documents in the shape of letters, which lay un-

opened on the table, and began the examination of their directions. One seemed particularly to attract her notice ; and, profiting by her visitor's being short-sighted, she gently broke the seal, and having glanced at the contents, turned to me, and in a low voice said,

" There is the solution to an enigma. Take it home with you, and give me credit for having gratified, in one instance, your *curious* propensities."

I eagerly seized the paper, which Mrs. Cleveland delivered to me with a half-cunning glance ; and having got to the end of the old lady's influenza, remedies, and airings, I hastened to take my departure before she recovered her breath for a second oration.

When I reached home, I opened the paper Mrs. Cleveland had given me. It contained as follows :

" The Honourable Mrs. Cleveland.

"To a splendid brocaded, rich, elegant Turkish Costume, &c. ..... £10. 10*s*." ! ! !

Having ceased for a long time to visit the club in —— Street, the *soi-disant* Mr. Cleveland, I had

entirely lost sight of. It was impossible for me to regret the loss of his acquaintance, as there could be no doubt of his being one of that numerous tribe called *mauvais sujets;* a tribe which, to my shame as well as my misfortune, I had been too often in contact with during my youth, to begin a fresh score of friends on that account in my old age. I had enough also to think about in my poor Mrs. Cleveland, who, so far from profiting by my discourse, was more than ever linked with Willoughby: his cabriolet seemed to live at her door; his tall figure positively overshadowed her at every public place; he watched her smiles, her frowns, her eyes, and her words, with the most jealous scrutiny, only to be equalled by my own, who, in my character of guardian, bade fair sometimes to drive the lover from the field.

The character of the Turk being confessed by Mrs. Cleveland, I attempted to draw from her the whole truth of the affair. Mrs. Cleveland acknowledged at length that she was the Turk, and she trusted to my secrecy. As to her reasons for assuming the character, and her conduct in that character, she mentioned whims, caprices, temper, and the pleasure of deception.

Every time we met, I tried to ascertain the honest truth; but her answers were evasive. One day, however, we were sitting together: she was rather grave; I seized the opportunity to bring forward the old theme, the Turk. She started, and looking at me with a serious countenance, answered in a manner I never can forget.

"No one," she exclaimed, "can know what bitterness of spirit is, unless they have felt the fiend-like desire, I must call it, to see others as miserable as oneself. The momentary pangs I inflicted at that masquerade were so much extracted gall from my own intolerable griefs! I slept better that night from the knowledge that I had assisted in rendering others sleepless."

"Heavens! Mrs. Cleveland, do I hear you aright? and one of those you tormented was Willoughby!"

"It was my attack upon him which completely deceived the world as to my being the Turk. The world is a world of wisdom, as every passing hour proves. How should I have been able to torment Willoughby had I not known him?"

"You do know him?" I inquired.

"Perfectly!"

"And admire him?"

"I admire every one who gives me reason so to do."

"And yet you abused, tormented, and rendered wretched and contemptible in the eyes of others, him whom you profess to admire?"

"I did so: you must not betray me."

"Betray you! I only wish that you would place your entire, and not your half, confidence in me: for though you would fain make me believe so, yet I never will conceive the possibility of your being actuated by wanton malice, even under all the spleen the jaundice ever gendered, to act as you appear to have done that night. Some far better reason must exist: tell me, I entreat—it could not be for sport that you made so many unhappy beneath your cutting lash?"

"It was wretchedness, absolute and incurable wretchedness, which drove me to that masquerade; it was the bitterness of my own heart which made me try to embitter the pleasures of every one else. I was afterwards sorry that I said what I did to several people; but I was obliged to veil the particular object of my attack by some general skirmishing,—to make a diversion with others, so that

the worm beneath my foot should not be too well observed."

"Was Willoughby that worm?"

"Ask me no more questions: be content with the confidence I have placed in you, and 'judge not, that ye be not judged.'"

A short time after this conversation, a fresh scene opened upon me, and several weeks passed away before I and Mrs. Cleveland again met.

CHAPTER VII.

INCONSISTENCY.

"So," I exclaimed, laying down the morning paper, and drawing towards me the smoking muffin which the obsequious waiter of —— Hotel had just placed on the table,—"so the Parliament is dissolved! Folly, vice, extravagance, and humbug, rejoice! upraise your drooping heads, your reign is about to commence, whilst that of wisdom, honesty, and humble common sense is to cease! What waste, what extravagance, will not the next few weeks present!—what falsehoods will be uttered, what ruin will ensue to many,—ruin of fortune, of constitution, and eternal ruin! for a general election is the signal for the infringement of every commandment. Robbery, Sabbath-breaking, swearing, and perjury, are the fruits often brought forth in proving our independence,

and proclaiming to the world the glories of our constitution. I hate absolute sovereignty of all sorts; I never was fond of gaping at kings and queens in any country, and fortunately for me there is no law to compel me so to do. Save and deliver me, therefore, from that sovereignty which would meet me at every turn—which would pester me in groves as well as in courts, in fields as in palaces—the sovereignty of the people!" As I mused thus, the waiter entered.

"Two gentlemen on particular business wait upon you from Ashbridge."

"From where?"

"Ashbridge, sir; their names are White and Williams;—Mr. White and Mr. Williams. They came to the door in a hackney-coach."

"I do not know Mr. White or Mr. Williams, and I know nothing of Ashbridge."

"Lord, sir, they say it is your native town."

"Town!" I exclaimed, "I belong to no town, though I had better say to every one. If they had said Pekin, Ispahan, or Calcutta, some clue might have been afforded, some possible means of recognition granted. It must be a mistake; so go down and say I am not at home."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I said you were at home, and they are coming up stairs."

Two ponderous pair of shoes were now heard creaking at a slow and deliberate pace up the staircase approaching my room. They paused; the waiter, unauthorised by me, threw the door wide open, and in entered Mr. White and Mr. Williams of Ashbridge; the one in buckskins, top-boots, and a grass-green riding-jacket; the other in blue coat, silk pantaloons, and what were once termed Hessian boots. Never in my life had I seen either of the two before. It is a mistake assuredly, thought I, and they will soon beat a retreat. Not so; they pushed boldly forward into my very intrenchments, turning the exposed flank of my breakfast-table. Happily, however, though their movements were warlike, their countenances were pacific; and so prodigal were they of their bows and smiles, that I felt constrained, in justice to my own breeding, to subdue my frowns, and return bow for bow; but smile for smile was beyond my powers of charity or courtesy.

I hate to be interrupted in my morning meal. My second cup of tea was not tasted; which, with my muffin and my appetite, would be quite spoiled

in attending to the conversations of persons with whom, at one glance, I was assured I had nothing in common. My guests were, to all appearance and to say the most of their gentility, half-bred country 'squires, possessing perhaps some spice of the farmer, attorney, or tradesman. Now with such I could positively have nothing to do: the country exists only in England, and I had been in foreign lands the greater part of my life.

Whilst I was thus considering, Messrs. White and Williams advanced, and drawing their chairs towards the fire, formed, with myself and breakfast-table, a semicircle; the magical influence of which form I suppose it was which gave me a sudden recollection that I first opened my eyes to the fair light of heaven within two miles of a town called Ashbridge; which convenient remembrance brought further insight into the probable business of my intrusive guests. My suspicions were speedily confirmed, and, in a very flowery and flattering address, he of the Hessians and blue coat made known to me the wish of a large majority of the good people of Ashbridge, that I would confer upon them an eternal obligation by representing them in the Commons House of Parliament.

This address was seconded by him of the green jacket, who spoke much of himself, much of his companion, much of the Ashbridge people, but still more of a certain Mr. Lewis, who, he informed me, was the most influential person in the borough,—the very heart, the hand, the head of the whole town, with whose support success was undoubted, and from whom they, Messrs. White and Williams, were specially deputed. Long did Messrs. White and Williams talk, and accordingly long time had I to prepare my answer: as they spoke I sketched and filled up my reply, and when they ceased it was delivered.

I hate talking of my own affairs, even when consistent or explicable, as much as I like hearing of other people's; but when my concerns are neither explicable nor consistent, my distaste to laying them before the public must naturally increase. The less therefore that is said of them the better. I have already recorded my true opinion as concerns elections, electors, and elected. In the face, however, of those opinions, and they having been hitherto reckoned consistent even to obstinacy, I absolutely found myself, within three hours of my knowledge that Parliament was dissolved, seated

in my travelling-chaise, and proceeding, with all the speed four horses could convey me, to the town of Ashbridge, Mr. White by my side, and Mr. Williams on the seat behind the carriage with my valet, having made up my mind to offer myself to the electors as a fitting representative. Mr. White, full of delight at having made me his captive, and of the consequence which is generally attached to those who roll along with four post-horses, talked immoderately for the first few miles of our journey; and was so tossed by the rapidity of motion from my shoulder to the window, and then towards the lamp, and then to the back of the carriage, that if I was not sick of looking at him, he became enough so himself as to require more air. Air in a carriage was death to me; but a sick companion was worse than death; so my only alternative was to submit, and the windows were put down.

Though in the month of August, I shook from head to foot, and, to Mr. White's unrestrained surprise, drew my cloak around me. It would not answer — every thread seemed to admit a volume of the cold eastern blast to my chilly frame and rheumatic shoulder. Mr. White's pale cheeks

became of a more rosy hue, whilst the colour had entirely fled from mine. Time, however, which cures most evils, brought a remedy for those I suffered under: the air, combined with the motion of the carriage, acted at length as a soporific upon Mr. White. He began to nod; I dared not stir for fear of disturbing the happy tendency. He began to sleep; I was quiet as the grave. He began to snore, and in one moment every window was drawn up, and neither they nor Mr. White's eyes opened again for the remainder of the journey.

I now had ample time to reflect, perhaps to repent; but, however, I resolved to see the important Mr. Lewis, and ascertain the exact state of affairs in Ashbridge, ere I fairly embarked or retreated. The most difficult part of the task I had to perform was the deciding upon and announcing my political principles. I really had none. In a moral country like this, such an avowal, to be sure, is shocking; but for the life of me I could not declare myself a whig or tory, democrat or aristocrat, radical or conservative, or anything in fact, unless it was that old-fashioned thing, so completely out of date to modern ears, a constitutionalist! If I avowed myself any

thing, it must be that; if I was called upon for a profession of faith, I had no other reply to make but that I fought under the banners of the constitution; — a very tame avowal, I felt well aware of, in these big-worded days, when revolution, reformation, and emancipation are as familiar to our ears as the commonest household terms.

We arrived at last at the Crown at Ashbridge. One glance from the window showed that my calling was known, though not, alas! my election sure. The sound of the bell, the bow of the landlord, the smile of the landlady, and the step of the waiter, proclaimed that the four foaming steeds, with Mr. White's and Mr. Williams' increased importance of air, had betrayed my secret even before I descended. By that time Mr. Williams had blazoned the fact to half a dozen open-mouthed friends, who came forward to meet him, and my servant to half a dozen idlers, whom he intended to assist him.

Stiff, cold, tired, and hungry, I entered a barn-like sitting-room, where a large cavern of a chimney yawned before me. An ocean of floor surrounded a small island of carpet, which lay awaiting the arrival of a small claw-table turned

up in the corner of the room; and a few horse-hair chairs were posted at intervals against the walls, in expectation also of the same honour. No drapery warmed the naked windows, but all was alike bare and comfortless, excepting, as though in mockery of the surrounding poverty, the well-laden, well-polished sideboard of glass and plate, glittering with all the customary splendour of even the humblest inn.

"Dinner directly!" I exclaimed, with a voice of more authority than was quite becoming in a humble suitor for the people's favour;—"and light a fire, if fire can warm this well of an apartment."

"Fool that I was to have come here!" I continued as the waiter retired, and I placed myself on one of the high-backed, high-legged, slippery chairs which stood against the wall.

Time, in its due course, moved on. The claw-table having walked to the small carpet, was covered with a clean cloth, and some of the sideboard's treasures, by the hands of a bustling waiter; and the grate, having received some of the treasures of the deep at the hands of a dirty maid, began to extend its warmth around; and

I, with increase of circulation, began to be in better humour with my vocation and the town of Ashbridge; which good humour was still further increased by the arrival of the fat smiling landlord, with a dish of very palatable-looking cutlets, followed by the waiter, bearing a tray on which smoked, in addition to the customary potatoes and greens, a fat fowl and bread sauce.

What had become in the mean time of White and Williams, I neither knew nor cared. I was aware that my well-lined purse was still safe in my pocket; so far I had no cause of complaint against my travelling companion, and I only hoped that my servant had no reason for considering himself less fortunate. With this reflection, I began the discussion of the cutlets and fowl; which I had pretty nearly demolished, in addition to a glass of hot wine and water, when Messrs. Williams and White again appeared on the scene. These two gentlemen proved, however, only the humble precursors of Mr. Lewis the lawyer, whose approaching visit they announced.

In due time Mr. Lewis appeared, and, after some general conversation, my two original friends departed,—not, however, without a glance from the

more influential person to that effect; which glance was occasioned by my calling for a bottle of port wine; and though the two gentlemen seemed very willing to stay and discuss it, yet, in consequence of the before-mentioned influential look, they thought right to decline.

"I suppose, sir," said my companion, when we were left *tête-à-tête*, drawing towards himself the bottle of black port wine, — "I suppose, sir, you will not object to my giving you a few hints as to the line of conduct best suited for your adoption: that is to say, you will not, I presume, object to follow the advice which I shall think proper to offer for the attainment of the end in view,—namely, your being returned as representative for this ancient and independent borough." My silence I imagine Mr. Lewis to have construed into consent, for, after a pause, he resumed: "Sir, there are many and various reasons why you should be successful; as likewise there are many and various reasons why you may be beat."

"Beat!" I exclaimed,—"how so, if there is no contest?"

"A contest is possible."

"Mr. White and Mr. Williams gave me to understand there was not the slightest chance of one, the old members having relinquished the borough,—one at least, if not both."

"Why, sir, the borough has relinquished them. But to continue what I was saying; you may be beat, or you may have no opposition; you may be popular, or you may not; all will depend, pardon *my* saying so, on your adhering, or not, to the counsels which I shall take the liberty to pour into your ears. As to whatever may be *your* political opinions, I must inform you that *ours* of the town of Ashbridge are liberal. We are against king, lords, and church; we do not much fancy the House of Commons; we abominate the army, are averse to the navy, the new police, taxation, tithes, poor-rates, and unpaid magistrates; in short, sir, we of the town of Ashbridge are for the abolition of abuses; for which end, we are for universal suffrage and vote by ballot—you understand me, sir; we are for radical reform in its most comprehensive and extended meaning, by which alone honest men may obtain their rights, and get their own."

"I understand you perfectly—

'When those may take who have the power,
And they may keep who can.'"

"Ah, sir," said Mr. Lewis, filling for the fourth time his glass, "I see you are one of us, quite one of the right sort,—here is to your health, sir. Such being the Ashbridge opinions, you have only to deliver the same with a proper theatrical expression upon the hustings. You understand the sort of thing. The arm in movement, the leg advanced, the voice raised with a bold air; but you must address yourself only to the mob, and treat them as the only enlightened, understanding, instructed, and instructive portion of the community: the day will be then yours, I could swear. As to your foreign policy——"

"Foreign policy!" I ejaculated; "what are the people of Ashbridge to know about foreign policy?"

"Know, sir?" replied Mr. Lewis with an offended air,—"why, sir, more than yourself, sir; or how, sir, are they to be capable of guiding you in the right way, sir?"

"Very true," I replied meekly, as I rose to stir the fire.

"Ireland is also another question ——"

"Ireland!" I exclaimed, again interrupting my political tutor.

"Sir, we must emancipate that poor, enslaved, ill-used country."

"Ill-used indeed," muttered I to myself, "when brother's hand is raised against brother, and a man's worst enemies are those belonging to his own house."

"As to the slave-trade, we are indifferent. You may vote as you like in that respect."

"I am most happy to be so trusted," I replied with the most humble of aspects. "But, pray, may I inquire who were your former members,—how they came to resign, and what might have been their political opinions?"

"To answer you categorically, sir, our former members were Sir Stephen Buckskin and Lord William Grandville. They have not so much resigned the borough as the borough has resigned them, as I before told you. Their political opinions I almost forget; but I believe Lord William professed radicalism, and Sir Stephen toryism. At first they were both popular; but they have since given grievous offence; so you must mind what

you are about, for we are devilish hard task-masters, I can assure you. Lord William brought the whole town upon his back, by dancing with a poor slip of a girl, a farmer's daughter, whilst Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. White, and the doctor's three daughters were sitting by. All his conduct was of the same kind; he was quite indifferent as to rank; and when he received a hint on the subject from no less a person than myself, he actually had the audacity to tell me that he could not exactly see the difference, as to station, between the daughter of a soapboiler or the daughter of an ironmonger! Now, sir, Mrs. L.'s father is an ironmonger! Well, sir, as he appeared to be such a radical reformer in private, as well as in public, I resolved he should sit no longer, and my opinion has influenced the chief part of the town; so that if his lordship stands, I do not suppose he will get ten votes. As to poor Sir Stephen, he completely ruined himself"—I started, and was all attention at the awful word *ruin!*—"he completely ruined himself in the good opinion of every one by bringing to trial, for poaching, the first cousin of Mr. Small's 'prentice's wife's brother-in-law. He never held his popularity afterwards; such an insult to the town who

had been so kind to him, not to let his voters' apprentices connexions kill a brace of pheasants on his manor! Fie upon him for a niggardly fellow! So you see, sir, the field is open to you,—the day is your own, if you will only follow my advice, and take warning by the faults of others."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ELECTION.

I DID not think it necessary to inform Mr. Lewis, when he took his departure, that I was an early riser. Long, therefore, before the hour which he had appointed for visiting me the following morning, I had risen, breakfasted, and perambulated a good part of the town of Ashbridge; and what was more, had made equal progress in my acquaintance with some of its inhabitants.

It was not my custom to walk the streets on week-days with an empty purse. It may be, I carried for convenience, ostentation, avarice, or extravagance, a goodly store about with me, and on this day I was not less well provided than usual. Into every decent-looking shop in the town I sauntered; and as I turned over the various goods they contained, admiring and purchasing with all

convenient despatch, I still found an opportunity to talk a little nonsense to the women, a little trade with the men, and to make friends with the children by promises of playthings,—as an earnest of which I let fall into their tiny hands certain pieces of silver, which pieces of silver I gave the mothers credit for helping them to dispose of to advantage. Neither my purchases nor my gifts were anonymous. I took good care that my name should be well known, and what my object was at Ashbridge I left to their own wits to discover. As I bent my steps towards home, I sought a certain Mr. Cash, the banker, and deposited in his hands the remains of my purse's contents, namely, bank bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds.

Little did friend Lewis imagine, when at twelve o'clock he appeared to inquire after my night's rest, my morning's appetite, and to instruct me in my duties of the day, that I had been so bold, without leave asked or obtained, as to make use of my legs, eyes, tongue, and other more available resources, so as to have secured before I broke my fast at eleven o'clock, the promise of thirty good votes, and as many more doubtful ones; and all without professing any political

opinions, or having a guess, but from Lewis' own representation, of those of any one in Ashbridge.

After some discourse about the weather, and the news in a paper I held in my hand, Mr. Lewis begged to know whether I could break through the habits of a *Londoner*, and venture on an early walk.

I looked doubtfully towards the atmosphere without. Lewis by way of encouragement pronounced the day to be much better than it appeared. "But even if it were not so," he said, "pleasure must give way to business. If you are to represent Ashbridge, you must begin your canvass; you must make acquaintance, secure votes, show yourself abroad, and proclaim your intentions; in fact, you have no time to lose: never mind a few rain-drops, the streets are well paved, so let us be going."

Apparently convinced by Mr. Lewis' arguments, I arose, rang for my great coat and umbrella, and gave directions about dinner, and, with some delays, purposely invented to increase my companion's fretful impatience, I equipped myself, and we departed.

I am not going to drag my reader into all the

haunts to which friend Lewis drew me; suffice it, that my morning's walk had answered entirely the effect I intended. The fame of my purchases, my civility, my knowledge of trade, and my fondness for children, I found blazoned abroad into every house where I entered; but more particularly the bank bills of 10,000*l.* in the hands of Messrs. Cash, Smash, and Profit. Mr. Lewis was completely mystified by the attention I everywhere received. No politics were discussed, no opinions demanded, no professions made, but the votes were obtained almost unsolicited, and my success as good as secured.

Vanity, however, is a very comfortable foible; and Mr. Lewis having his proper share, arranged the matter of my popularity to his own satisfaction. I was *his* friend, *his* candidate—in short, *his* pupil; and I was really so far *his* friend as not to undeceive him upon the real state of the case; he therefore returned home to talk to his wife of the wonders *he* had performed. "Well, they may call me influential," he exclaimed, "but I am powerful. My popularity is such that no other guarantee, than my regarding him as fit for the situation, was required to declare Mr. Morland almost our repre-

sentative. Never did I witness so successful a canvass. There was no demur, no wavering; the election is as good as concluded. Dr. Round has asked me and him and White and Williams to dinner to-morrow to meet Colonel Fly, and Sir Ulysses Sigh—there's for you, Martha! and the day after we are engaged to Cash."

"Am I asked?" Mrs. Lewis inquired with a doubtful air.

"I think not, love—a men party, I believe."

"Men! not a bit of it—Mrs. Cash would never dream of such a thing. No, I will be bound to say that all the ladies are invited but me. Mrs. Cash is as rude as a bear, and thinks herself so grand! but there will be a crash some day, with their powdered footboy, and their coachman's silver-laced hat, and their newly-lined pew at church, and their horses! Yes, there will be a crash, and then Mrs. Cash will be low enough; she won't think herself above the lady of an attorney when she is a bankrupt's wife. But I suppose you will give this Mr. Morland a dinner yourself?"

"*I* give him a dinner, Martha! *I!*—I spend my money on him, by whom I intend to gain money! the thing is absurd. At all events, there

is no time; on Saturday he leaves town for B—— until the nomination day, so I could not give him a dinner if I would."

"Well," said Mrs. Lewis, "I *was* in hopes to have revenged myself upon that Mrs. Cash, by not inviting her to our dinner."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, love, but I will find some other means to revenge your cause, or my name is not Giles Lewis."

The day on which I was to dine at Mr. Cash's, there appeared in the public prints the following letter:—

"TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF ASHBRIDGE.

"Gentlemen,

"A requisition, signed by a numerous body of the respectable and independent inhabitants of Ashbridge, having been forwarded to me in London by the hands of two of the requisitionists, inviting me to come forward as a candidate for the honour of representing the said town in Parliament, I hereby present myself before you. Not, however, as it is usual to say, with confidence—far from it. Though born amongst you, I am a stranger; and though once my family were landed

proprietors in your neighbourhood, I cannot now boast of an acre as my own. All that I can urge in my favour is the willingness to serve your interests and those of the country at large to the best of my ability.

"As to my political creed, I have the welfare of my country most strenuously at heart; and if honoured by being elected one of your representatives in the Commons House of Parliament, I can only say that I will give my vote upon all subjects as shall to me seem best. Having had the honour of serving my country in the field, I trust that the same attachment which made me willingly shed my blood in her cause will guarantee the good faith of my political principles.

"Eloquent I am not; as an orator, therefore, I fear I shall do little credit to your choice; but if your local interests can be thereby advantaged, I trust that I could command attention, though not admiration.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"Matthew Morland.

"Crown Tavern, Ashbridge."

Such was my letter, which was written, sent off, and printed without consulting my Mentor, Lewis. He, poor man, was horrified when first it met his eyes, and with the paper in his hand rushed into my presence to demand an explanation of my address, to ascertain if I was really the author, or, being the author, if I was of sane mind.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, pacing up and down the room in tremendous agitation, "what have you done, Mr. Morland? Such a milk-and-water address! Your cause is at an end—you are ruined and undone. Madness! to say that you will vote as seemeth you best! Madness indeed! And then to bring in your profession! a profession which *I* had so zealously concealed from view; a profession abominable in the eyes of Englishmen in general, and in those of the independent electors of Ashbridge in *particular*. Why, sir, are you not aware that a red coat is regarded by a Briton as the veriest scorpion in existence? Have you lived so long out of England as not to know that to be looked upon coldly, to be spurned and despised, you have only to announce that you have served? Why, sir, the debates in the House might have told you as much. Is not

their constant theme the proud stomachs of those blood-suckers of our substance? Does not that patriot, Mr. Rapine, toil day and night to destroy the nest they have made in this country? And now, sir, let *me* tell you once for all, that if you wish to represent Ashbridge, you must work too, sir; you must support Rapine upon all occasions: and if you do not,—why, sir, you will never have my support, or that of any of the independent electors of Ashbridge, I can tell you."

Mr. Lewis paused. I observed, that I was sorry my production was likely to prove so injurious to my cause. "Sorry! sir, you may well be sorry! your election is clean gone from your hands. You have despised my counsels, rejected my advice, and followed the dictates of your own self-willed ignorance. You must take the consequences, sir, of talking of services, and such follies, to men of influence, authority, and understanding. Why, your address would not gain a vote as a hospital surgeon. Services, indeed! it would offend the most stupid being that ever ——"

"The carriage is at the door," announced the waiter, interrupting friend Lewis.

"Are you ready, sir?" I inquired: "it is six o'clock, the hour Mr. Cash put upon his card for dinner."

"No, sir, I am not ready," replied Lewis rudely.

"Shall I send the carriage back for you?" I demanded calmly.

"No, sir, you shall not send the carriage back; I shall go on foot; I shall ..... sir, I am independent of you; you decline my guidance—you may see how you can walk alone. I am not going to sacrifice my life, or more precious character, in your support; I am not going to have my head or windows broken in your cause. I shall no longer profess myself your friend. I am an influential man in Ashbridge, as I need not tell you; my influence you have had good proof of; that influence you shall no longer profit by. You have scorned my advice—beware my enmity!" And the man of influence flounced out of the room with the air of one demented,—nearly upset the waiter in the passage, whom he met bearing a dish of mutton-chops, and demolished a basket of eggs belonging to a girl whom he encountered on the

steps,—for all which destruction I had afterwards to pay.

In about five minutes, with a more sober pace, I mounted into the Ashbridge fly, and was conveyed to Mr. Cash's, where I found the party assembled, to each individual of which party I was separately introduced. There were Mr., Mrs., and two Miss Browns, Sir Ulysses Sigh, Colonel Fly, Mr. White and his son. The last was the greatest beau in Ashbridge, and who, as my cultivated talent at observations made me perceive, had an incipient flirtation with the second Miss Cash; a flirtation not so obvious to every eye, especially to that of Mr. Cash sen., a decided aristocrat of his caste, who would regard a tradesman son-in-law with more horror than could be excusable in the blood of a Montmorenci. Besides which, he evidently beheld with complacency the attentions which his daughter also engrossed from Sir Ulysses Sigh, a man in years, of broken health and fortune. The Cash family were numerous; and two youths, towards whom the Miss Browns cast many an anxious look when the dinner-hour arrived, rivalled young White with their watch-chains, seals, and chitterlings.

When we were seated at table, Mr. Lewis arrived, and sank into the vacant place between the governess and the youngest male Cash. He cast his eye around, probably to see how I fared. I was seated between Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Cash, the portly persons of each lady well incased in scarlet gowns,—scarlet was my election colour,—and I was much more struck by the compliment as the month was August!

The dinner was good, and the attendance not bad. There was nothing to mark that such hospitality was of rare occurrence; indeed, I should rather imagine to the contrary, from overhearing Miss Charlotte Brown, who was somewhat tinged with 'blueism,' say to the young Cash, by whom she was seated,

"To be sure, no one lives so well as your father. At his table I am bewildered in a maze of dishes; and as I follow their meandering course, know not, amongst the sweets around, where to fix my perplexed mind!"—To which the youth replied:—"There is only one way—eat of everything, as I do"

"Oh, fie! Mr. William!—how greedy!"

"Why, the dinner was not sent up to look at."

"Very true; but yet it does go to my heart to beg of you to destroy, on my account, that lovely cottage before you, which my imagination tells me contains a trifle."

"Your imagination is right for once — so here goes, and not for yourself alone, but for me too; and there is Sir Ulysses, besides, casting a longing look this way."

Notwithstanding my letter, I was still an object of attention; spite of Lewis's frowns, all else smiled on me. My health was drunk, with success to my cause and *principles*. Then I returned thanks, and begged to drink "the ladies," to whose fair support I trusted so much; and I heard Miss Brown whisper to Colonel Fly, that she thought me a very fine man *of my years!* About the hour of twelve I returned home, having lost three rubbers of whist; but, contrary to Lewis's predictions, in no other respect the worse. I slept soundly, and felt perfectly secure of my money and my election; both being in the hands of Mr. Cash, the *bona fide* influential man of the place. Oh, magical power of ten thousand pounds!

Lewis, in deserting me, forgot his politics, and

swore allegiance to Sir Stephen Buckskin, who was already in the field with Lord William. He took the oaths and his seat at the baronet's committee, and there, for the first time, heard of my deposit in Mr. Cash's bank. Poor Lewis! even White and Williams ridiculed his hasty decision against me, and his wife did worse; she scolded and she stormed till the poor man was fain to take to his bed, and sham sickness during the remainder of the election, for the sake of peace and quiet. Every future misfortune of the family—the sickness of one child, the improvidence of another, the shabby clothes of a third, or any other domestic accidents, were each in their turn laid by his wife at Mr. Lewis's door, for having slighted such a friend as I should then have probably proved to them all, blessed as I was with riches, and unblessed as I was with relations.

The day of election at length arrived.* Four candidates started. The two former members, a Mr. Pique, whom no one knew, save a few vociferous artisans, who had heard his sentiments delivered in a neighbouring field, and highly approving

* It is hardly necessary to observe, that the election here described was previous to the Reformed Parliament.

the same, declared their approbation by loud shouts whenever he appeared, and something like groans or hisses at such times as the other candidates ventured to walk the streets.

By good fortune, an old friend of my father's rose up in my support. Old as he was,—for he was fifteen years my senior,—he was still active in mind and body, sensible, independent, and popular. I was proposed by him, and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Cash, at whose house I resided during the election.

> "To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
> Of patriot's eloquence to flash down fire
> Upon your foes, was never meant my task."

Still I did not acquit myself ill on the hustings. The interest upon which I stood was independent, the professions I had to make were few, and what I had to utter I spoke honestly, concisely, and coherently. I found it therefore but little trouble to make a daily speech; the great annoyance lay in being obliged, out of common politeness, to listen to the addresses of others. Even to Sir Stephen's eloquence, though lost to the crowd by the uproar which ever proceeded from thence during his efforts to enlighten their understand-

ings and captivate their senses, I could not be deaf, standing as I did upon the same platform; and, alas for poor human nature! it was a melancholy spectacle, the nothingness to which those powers of speech in which Burke and Chatham shone and triumphed could be reduced, and the utter contempt with which the worthy baronet treated all such books as have been written for the better understanding of our mother tongue, and for the purpose of settling our faith on all knotty points of grammar and pronunciation! — Repetition followed upon repetition in the baronet's discourse, folly upon folly, and ignorance upon ignorance, till the compound of absurdity being complete, he would smile, bow, and retire, generally followed by a shower of rotten apples, or other offensive tokens of popular dislike.

Lord William would then appear. He was handsome, young, and had a manly, sportsmanlike air, which told well before a country audience; but he had no great turn for oratory. The defect lay not, however, in his voice, which burst forth from his ample chest with a power that in the hunting-field must have proved invaluable, and on the hustings was not to be despised; only he

lacked matter: having got by heart a little of the radical cant of the day, and a few bad jokes, more sporting than political, he would gabble through his lesson, make a kind of half nod, and retire with some, though not general applause.

Pique was the powerful man of the party. When he spoke, silence instantly ensued; when he joked, the mob were convulsed with laughter; and when he was pathetic, white handkerchiefs were instantly displayed by every female of his party. His three opponents were of course the particular objects of his vituperation and wit. The poaching-story was brought forward to vilify in every possible way poor Sir Stephen. Lord William was abused as a lord, and the son of a man who had once consumed the substance of the people by holding a place of honour at court. As to myself, I had been a soldier, a cruel murderer, a man of blood, knowing no law but the sword, &c. &c. Then, with happy inconsistency, he would fly off in praise of Bonaparte, extol his merits, and lament his fall, and, winding up with abuse of everything but his own particular party, would retire amidst the plaudits of the throng.

The election was at length over; Lord William

at the head of the poll, myself second, and the other two nowhere in point of numbers. Then ensued visits of thanks, dinners, a ball given by the two newly-elected members, payment of bills, and finally a bilious fever! The doctor, however, having his own reasons for being satisfied with the present members, had no desire for a second election; he therefore took pains to cure me, succeeded, and sent me to recruit my strength and breathe the air on the sea-coast.

CHAPTER IX.

A TALE.

"If I could but find my dear Mrs. Cleveland here!" I exclaimed as I entered the town of Brighton. "She must be in the country somewhere, and perhaps either a fashionable doctor, a friend, or her own inclinations, may have induced her to come here." In vain were my hopes, however; no Mrs. Cleveland was at Brighton.

Every fresh arrival which I eagerly followed only ended in disappointment, as did every new bonnet which I observed. September closed; the weather was cold, so I determined to return to London, and accordingly started, and reached the inn at ——.

For the space of about fifteen minutes I had gazed quietly from my carriage window at such

sights as an inn-door generally affords. I had seen the arrival of a fast-flying coach, and its as speedy departure, after tossing various parcels into various hands extended to receive them, and depositing, with almost equal celerity, a couple of passengers with their great coats, umbrellas, and carpet-bags. The coach gone, the vacuity of mind which ensued was happily filled, for a few more minutes, by the appearance, at a parlour window opposite, of a smart, pert-looking girl, holding a laughing baby in her arms, which baby or nurse excited sufficiently the notice of a recruiting sergeant passing by as to make him stop. Much jocose conversation ensued, till at the back of the scene a door was thrown hastily open, and a sour-looking elderly woman appeared: the girl started backwards, the soldier vanished forwards, the window was closed, and the baby and girl, with very piteous faces, both retreated under the guidance of the sour-looking female.

Nothing further offering itself to amuse my fancy, I began to wonder what had detained me so long at the inn-door; and casting a glance to where the horses should be, saw nothing but the bare pole, on which, to show the disregard with

which it was treated, as well as myself, a ragged urchin was mounted, making as if he was driving post; no other creature being in the way, biped or quadruped, likely to give him disturbance in his play by assuming the reality of the part.

"Where are the horses?" I exclaimed, putting down the glass, and in a voice which I meant to be of authority. "Where are the horses?" I called still louder. "Where the devil are the horses?" I screamed for the third time, with my head and shoulders out of the window. This had its due effect, for the waiter rushed forth.

"I am sorry to say, sir, there are no horses; but if you choose to alight, perhaps some may be in presently. Your servant said you were in no hurry."

"My servant! how dare he presume to know if I am in a hurry or not? an impudent fellow!—where is he?"

"In the bar, refreshing himself."

"And where are all your horses gone?"

"Oh, sir, to-day is the great sale at ——; such a lot of carriages as are gone there: and,

besides, Lord A—— and suite, to Brighton, took four pair, and Mrs. C—— three pair going up."

"Well, well, open the door. I see no harm in the outside of your inn; and if your beds look tolerable, I will dine and sleep here." Accordingly I established myself in a warm parlour, looking towards the street, and in truth was not sorry, to explain my secret thoughts, to have an excuse for stopping where I was.

Of course my curiosity drew me frequently from the fire to the window; but the prospect was ever barren of interest or incident, till about dusk a heavily-laden chaise drew up to the door, and a smart, active, foreign-looking servant sprang from the seat behind, screaming, as I well knew, in vain —

"Horses out directly!"

"What, no horses!" continued he; "so you pretend to keep an inn, and have no horses?"

A long explanation followed, and the discontented servant glancing at the jaded pair which had brought them, approached the carriage window to inform those who were within of the unfortunate state of things without. I looked eagerly

for the master, but no master was there ; a Leghorn bonnet, deep veil, and small female hand, were all that I could see. Though not vociferous, for I could not catch the sound of her voice, yet the lady was evidently not inclined to submit to her fate without murmuring, and risking an effort to avert the evil. The master of the inn was called ; the post-boy who had driven her, and even a passer-by, attracted, no doubt, by the voice of female woe, assisted at the council. The end, however, of the discussion was, the post-boy mounting his wearied horses and departing, the passenger proceeding on his way, and the landlord, with a smiling air, offering his arm to assist the disconsolate traveller as she unwillingly descended from the carriage. The lady's figure was youthful, and a small foot appeared from beneath her gown: her veil was down, but a gust of wind—fortunate auxiliary in romance !—was now equally obliging to as anxious a pair of eyes as ever looked out of the heads of any of Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes, and, by blowing aside the envious gauze, gave to my view the features of—Mrs. Cleveland ! I actually screamed with delight, and was flying to the door to receive her,

when the consideration that she was as fast bound as myself to the spot we were then in checked my impatience, and I sat down to consider where she was going, why she was in such a hurry, and why she travelled in so humble a manner; for her carriage was plain, and its luggage so beyond precedent, that for a pair of horses to have drawn it seemed next to miraculous.

When the waiter appeared, I inquired respecting the last arrival.

"It is a lady, sir, who when she heard there were no horses did not take the matter so quietly as yourself,—I thought she would have cried, she was so vexed. She is going across the sea."

"Across the sea!" I exclaimed, starting from my chair. "Good heavens!"

"Why, sir, there is nothing strange in a lady going to France now-a-days. Every one travels; though, maybe, I suppose you have not, sir, by your being so surprised."

"How is this lady called?"

"Cleveland, I think—but the servant is a foreigner and rather close, and the maid is sitting with her."

"Sitting with her! impossible!" I exclaimed.

"Lord, sir! you seem surprised at everything: why, I thought you might have seen stranger sights than a lady, who maybe is no lady, having her maid to eat with her."

I was thunderstruck at the waiter's information. "It cannot be Mrs. Cleveland!" said I.

"Cleveland is the name, I am certain — the *currier* told me."

"The courier! then she is going in fair earnest, and I am tied to England by my *parliamentary duties!* Well, I must see her. There, sir, take Mr. Morland's compliments to Mrs. Cleveland, and, if she will allow me, I will wait upon her."

The answer was soon brought.

"Mrs. Cleveland's compliments, and would be happy to see Mr. Morland."

To her apartment I accordingly repaired. The door was thrown open, and, with her writing-case open before her, I found my dear Mrs. Cleveland. Uttering an exclamation of delightful surprise, she flew towards me with both her hands extended.

"This is charming! I was so desirous of seeing you before I left England, and now my wish is granted. It is an ill wind that blows nobody

good; so, thanks to the want of post-horses, we shall spend the evening together—the last evening I shall pass in England."

"Are you then really going abroad, and alone? But where is your husband?"

"At Paris; and I am going to join him. My children are, for the present, with my aunt Somers, till our plans are sufficiently arranged for them to join us abroad."

"Surely, you are not going to make a long stay?" and I gazed at Mrs. Cleveland earnestly. She looked handsome as ever, but thin and pale.

"You have been unwell," I continued; "so sit down and let us have a little comfortable chat once more. Why does not your husband come and fetch you?"

"Have you heard nothing, then?" said Mrs. Cleveland. "Do you not know what has happened?"

"No; you alarm me — I have heard nothing respecting you for an age."

"Well, I have been more fortunate respecting yourself, for the newspapers have instructed me as to all your proceedings, and I feared through the same medium mine would be equally public."

"Feared!" I demanded anxiously. Mrs. Cleveland coloured, the tears stood in her eyes. "What is this?" I inquired. "Has any misfortune occurred?"

"Nothing new; nothing but what I could have predicted when first we met; indeed, what I did as good as tell you — what any one might have told you then as well as now — that we are ruined."

"Ruined!" I exclaimed. "Impossible! — Ruined! when surrounded by the luxuries I witnessed last spring in London?" Mrs. Cleveland covered her face with her hands. "Impossible!" And at that moment I had before my eyes her splendid equipage, her splendid apartments, and the costly plants which, from her balcony, perfumed the air with their delicious odour.

"Concealment is useless now," said Mrs. Cleveland, "as regards any one, for all that luxury has made itself wings and is fled; and as regards yourself, I was always anxious to throw it aside, even from our first acquaintance; but now you shall hear all—no, not exactly now, for we must dine first, and I have a third in that party, for I count upon our joining meals."

God knows why, but when she named a third, my thoughts instantly flew to Willoughby, and I felt a sickening sensation across my mind. I was relieved, however, by Mrs. Cleveland adding,

"It is one of the Williams' girls who is with me. I have taken her as my maid or governess: she was so earnest to accompany me, that I could not refuse. I should have been scrupulous on the subject, only abroad, if she does not like to remain with me, she will easily get a place as English governess. After dinner she will leave us, and then I will tell you everything."

Dinner over, Miss Williams gone, and our chairs drawn close to the fire, Mrs. Cleveland began as follows:—

"To fall in love is so common an occurrence at one period or another of our lives, that I make no apology for honestly confessing that at seventeen Horace Cleveland had made himself the absolute master of my heart. Many a woman has granted her affections to a far less worthy object,—my taste no one could gainsay—my prudence was another question; but even for what was apparently contrary to its dictates I had an apology, for the only fault the being I posi-

tively worshipped possessed, I married him in utter ignorance of—his love of play! His poverty I gloried in, and repeated over and over again the decided opinion which I had adopted as my firm article of belief—that folly and wealth were nearly allied, and that for a man to be benevolent, high-minded, generous, and agreeable, he must have received his education to a degree in the school of privation. His good looks, agreeable manners, cultivated mind, and simple tastes, were the constant theme of my letters, the first year of our marriage, to my aunt Somers. This period we spent entirely in the country; and though not always *tête-à-tête*, yet of course we were much more so than in society.

"We lived in great splendour, for my fortune was large; and though we were neither of us the least ostentatious, yet Horace liked to indulge my taste; and I know, without having studied political economy, that spending, and not hoarding, is for the general benefit; and I was born a philanthropist, my husband not an egotist, so we were perfectly agreed in the propriety of disbursement. We did differ, however, as to the number of hunters I thought Horace required, and as to

the furniture of his study, and as to the splendour of a certain dressing-case I presented to him on his birth-day; however, on these points he yielded to my wishes, and I felt secretly gratified that his parsimony only showed itself as regarded his own expenses—his extravagance, as regarded mine. 'And this disinterested being,' I would exclaim, 'my family wished me not to marry—they dreaded his extravagance!' Horace's friends would smile as I spoke, and, as I wisely imagined, in ridicule of the caution of my relations. You never saw Horace——"

"Never saw him, Mrs. Cleveland! frequently."

"I am sure he left England about the time I first made your acquaintance."

"Why, my dear Mrs. Cleveland, you introduced me to him one night at Lady Brookeland's."

"Oh no! not to him; that was Francis Cleveland, my brother-in-law. So you imagined he was my husband! Poor Frank! he is not ill-looking, and a *very* nice person; but he is not to be named upon the same day as my husband. Horace is so handsome—I wish you had seen him."

"I begin to think I have seen him. Before I

knew you, I had a slight acquaintance with a singularly good-looking man, who bore your name; but—but—"

"But," said Mrs. Cleveland, blushing, "from the society you found him in, you did not dream that we bore any affinity to each other."

"You have guessed rightly," I replied with a sigh. Mrs. Cleveland sighed also, and after a moment's pause resumed her narrative.

"The first annoyance I ever felt after my marriage was at Horace's intimacy with a certain Mr. Savill. There was nothing in his manners, appearance, or character, that could in the least justify the evident pleasure my husband took in his society. He was a good deal with us in the country, but in London he seemed to live in our house. Though very much in the world, yet that was no reason for Horace to be particularly attracted towards him,—Horace was of a calibre in society to lead, not follow. With his own good sense and taste, to fix upon such an inferior being as Savill for his associate was to me matter of not only surprise, but annoyance;—a man who lived by play—who never opened his lips but to speak of the odd trick, the odds on the Derby

and St. Leger, or to make and accept a bet, which in due form, however trifling, he always booked most scientifically. However, the mystery of their friendship was at length cleared up.

"A note was brought one morning, which, without regarding the address, I opened. It was from Mrs. Somers, and contained these words:—

"'My dear Horace,

"'I shall be at home all day. I must speak with you—you know too well the subject. Do not tell your wife; and believe me yours,

"'E. Somers.'

"Astonished beyond measure at this note, and imagining every possible misfortune as having occurred to my aunt, her daughter, or ourselves, I flew to my husband's room; but he was out. My impatience would not allow me to wait his return home: ordering the carriage, I hastily threw myself into it, and was conveyed to my aunt, whom I implored to impart to me *her* distress, and if it were in the power of myself or husband to assist her in any way, she had only to command our time, money, or influence,—in fact,

all we possessed. Poor Mrs. Somers was dreadfully agitated at my appeal. She wept, trembled, and thanked me over and over again; but I could not persuade her to impart her distresses to me. In this state of things, Horace entered the room. I flew towards him, saying, 'You will assist my endeavours; for my aunt will confide her troubles to you.'

"'*Her* troubles!' exclaimed my aunt: 'would to Heaven that they were my troubles! poor, poor child, you little know who is the real victim!'

"I was completely bewildered; Mrs. Somers was in tears; Horace looking the picture of despair, evidently well aware of the state of things. I gazed from the one to the other in speechless astonishment.

"'What, what is the matter?' I exclaimed at length; 'speak, my dear Horace, speak!'

"'I cannot speak,' he said, 'for you will hate me.'

"'Never! never! never!' I screamed wildly.

Horace drew me towards him, and as he imprinted a kiss upon my cheek, he said, 'Your aunt can tell you everything; but I dare not listen to the tale."

"He then released me from his arms, and left the room. It was some time before my aunt could bring herself to speak; at length by slow degrees I drew from her as follows:—

"It appeared that Horace had always a decided taste for play, which unfortunate tendency had been too much encouraged by the society of Savill and others of the same stamp; and that, in following this pursuit, he had positively made away with everything he possessed. The poverty, therefore, under which he laboured when I married him was not so much his misfortune, as I had imagined, but his fault. Of this my aunt was well aware; but so much was I in love, so anxious was his mother that his gaming propensities should be concealed, and so partial was my aunt to him, and so convinced from his promises that he would never play again, that she consented not to inform me. For one year all was well; out of temptation Horace behaved admirably; but, in London, amongst his old associates, burning with desire to touch a little of my wealth, and exerting all their powers of wit to disgust him with the safe path of prudence unto which he seemed devoted, he hesitated, yielded, and soon lost a large sum.

It was paid; he won; he lost again; and his losings became public, and reached my aunt's ears. The consequence was, she taxed him with the breach of promise, but at the same time offered to assist him, if possible, in order to prevent the knowledge coming to my ears.

"This kindness, the accidental delivery of her note to me prevented. I have since known so many far, far more severe trials—so much engulfing misery, from which to escape would seem impossible, that I now wonder at the bitter sorrow I gave way to as I listened to my aunt's account. It is not the last blow to one's misery, but it is the first to one's felicity, which is the severest felt: it is not the stroke which breaks the heart, but that which breaks the spirit, which is the bitterest. So I felt. I had been so very happy in my husband, so proud of his merits, so devotedly attached to him,—so willing to believe, as youth ever will believe, that vice and virtue are as broadly distinct as light from darkness, and could not be mixed together in the same person, in the same heart, and the same mind! Short experience, alas! will tell to the contrary; and all that can be hoped for poor human nature is,

that the balance should be in favour of what is right against what is wrong! All this was a lesson that I had yet to learn; and as I shed a torrent of tears at my aunt's story, they fell in no-wise from the pecuniary loss that I must suffer, but solely that my beloved Horace should have been weak enough to forfeit his word, and have had bad taste enough to live with such associates as gamesters. The money, however, was paid: it was a larger sum than I could command, but our friends assisted us. In due time, I recovered my spirits, and, never dreaming that Horace could play again for the remainder of his days, I was soon nearly as much in love with him as ever. I should have been still happier if Savill had been less his companion; but he was supposed to be an admirer of Lady Mary Cleveland; and as her admirers had ever been rare, and were becoming still more so, I did not like to discourage his devotion to the family, for fear of being considered by my six unmarried sisters-in-law as a Marplot to their matrimonial speculations. I was secretly, however, convinced that Horace's purse, and not Lady Mary's heart, was

the object of his designs; but I kept my thoughts to myself.

"With years, my knowledge of the world became more perfected, and I corrected, from other sources than poor Horace's faults, my error as to the perfectibility of human nature. Time passed away, and with it came, first the suspicion and then the conclusion, that neither Horace's taste nor practice were at an end as regarded play. He said that he had got into the habit of making up ——'s party, and without incivility he could not decline so doing, especially as he never lost. I had sense enough to see the absurdity of his argument; but I had quite sense enough to *appear* convinced by my husband's reasoning.

"About this time I renewed my acquaintance with Mr. Willoughby. I had known him formerly at my grandmother's, where he was a constant visitor as a neighbour, for his estate joined Lady Harlowe's. Though a mere child, I excited his admiration; so much so, that at fifteen he made me a proposal of marriage,—a proposal in declining which I evidently inflicted so much pain, that I was for some time deeply grieved on the subject;

but though strongly urged by my lover to cure his wounds by recalling my words, I had courage enough to decline. I did not like Willoughby, yet I felt grateful to him for the distinction of his affection, when I otherwise met general neglect. In Lady Harlowe's society, it was never imagined that I could inherit her fortune: as she was a querulous old woman, the disgrace I was constantly in gave no grounds for the suspicion, but, on the other hand, afforded a sufficient excuse for regarding me with invariable coldness; the compliment, therefore, of Willoughby's opposite conduct could not be otherwise than strongly felt by any girl of commonly good feeling.

"If I did not like Willoughby much in those days, I disliked him still more in our renewed intercourse: I introduced him however to Horace, who invited him occasionally to dinner, and we met a good deal in society. It seems vanity to say so, but I could not prevent a suspicion shortly crossing my mind that Willoughby's love was unabated. He evidently lived in the world only as a means to see me, and it was also pretty evident that he was jealous of my husband. The colour would fly to his cheeks whenever I praised him;

and if he espied a tender glance between us, his eyes sparkled with anger; whilst, on the contrary, they shone with a peculiar and malicious air of satisfaction at such times as I was unattended by him, most particularly in the Newmarket weeks, — for Horace had embarked on the turf. He then would meet me in the highest spirits, only to be increased if the morning papers had announced, as was common, Mr. H. Cleveland's horse as beaten.

"Five years had I now been a wife; for many and various reasons I desired to travel: of course my wishes were laws in that respect. So with my professed anxiety to rub off my English prejudices, and to perfect my knowledge of foreign countries and languages, and my secret delight at removing Horace from his darling clubs, and myself from the society of Mr. Willoughby, we embarked for the Continent. In arranging our affairs before our departure, I was exceedingly surprised at the sums we had expended. The same spirit of justice which made me abominate the hoarding system, made me view with equal horror the idea of being in debt; but, alas! I found myself with bills twice the amount of what I had expected,

and Horace, unable to account for where his large allowance had flown, never having paid a bill for two years at least. I managed to arrange our money matters, however, and we left England for dear, beautiful, enchanting Italy!

"At the end of two years we returned home by way of Paris. Paris was extremely dissipated; it was not the gaiety of Italy, but a reckless gaiety which can be only called dissipation.

"I lived at fêtes, and in public, till I fell sick, and was confined to my hotel. Horace went everywhere — returned home at all hours, and his haggard countenance betrayed the life he was leading. Well, thought I, the carnival will soon be over, and Lent, even in Paris, will bring repose. I had heard that Mr. Willoughby was in Paris, but imagined that he had not found me out: what was my annoyance, therefore, when, one day that I was sufficiently recovered to dine with my husband, he told me that he had invited Willoughby to join us. I expressed my surprise, that as he did not particularly fancy his company in England, he should have gone out of his way to invite him to dinner now.

" ' I thought you would like it.' said Horace.

" ' Thank you for the attention ; but, my dear love, as we do not live upon such formal terms, that I dare not order my own *plat*, or invite my own guest, pray in future do not give yourself any trouble to provide my society.'

" Willoughby arrived. I had no reason to think his admiration was in the least abated ; the only difference that struck me was, that Horace and himself appeared to be on much more familiar terms than formerly. We told our Italian news, and he returned the compliment by a vast mass of what he professed to be English, very little of which I comprehended, and still less of which I believed ; but, however, it was delivered as gospel by Willoughby in his most sneering manner.

" From that hour Willoughby was my shadow : alas ! there was a reason for it which I blush to confess, but it must be told, for that reason compelled me to undergo his attentions. You have, of course, heard of the *salon* at Paris ; its fame at one period was blazoned throughout Europe. The folly of those idiots who lose there,

and the iniquity of those rogues who win, need not be described. Horace went there, unknown to me, and lost; — he played to regain, and lost more. Payment was necessary; he had nothing, and at Paris his credit was not equal to that of London. He was in the greatest distress, hating to apply to me for the money even if I could command it, and yet necessitated to raise it somehow. How Willoughby got into his confidence I know not; he did so, however, and lent Horace the money — *fifteen thousand pounds!*

"I have said the first blow of misfortune is the severest, but I know not if the acknowledgment which Horace made me before I left Paris was not as severely felt as the first discovery of his ruinous propensity. From that first blow of wretchedness I arose nearly as gay and confiding as ever; but now that I felt my own respectability, and that of my children were entirely at the mercy of a gambler, and he himself at the mercy of such a man as Willoughby, my spirit fled. From that hour a weight, as if of lead, seemed to oppress my drooping heart, which nothing could remove — no amusement, no excitement,

not even the caresses of my children, the tenderness of my husband, or the adulation of the world. Heaviness lay upon my spirit even when smiles decked my countenance and gaiety seemed the business of life.

" Willoughby was now, of course, completely in our confidence. I wished to return to Italy: he would not hear of it; and told me, that decidedly, as matters stood, nothing could be more absurd than to *force* my husband to relinquish play; the deed was done— the worst was over. To be sure, Paris was not the place to play in; the London clubs were fair, and to them he ought to return — and to them we did return.

" Alas! the lucky day arrived not: Horace no longer concealed from me his constant losses: and the money which should have paid our tradesmen's bills went, instead, to answer the demands of Savill, and such as him. I now attempted to make myself heard, by imploring that our establishment might be reduced, and that economy should be adopted in every possible way. But, alas! such propositions were only received by Horace in heaping imprecations on his own head for his wicked folly in obliging me to entertain

such ideas, and by entreating me, if I would not drive him to madness, never to speak of altering my mode of life;—that to see me, even to the smallest degree less well dressed, or less a *grande dame*, would be to drive him with more perseverance to the gaming-table, in the hopes of redeeming his losses. Willoughby was equally of opinion that retrenchment would be unwise. 'Your credit,' he would say, 'is at present unimpaired; but if your difficulties get known, which they most assuredly would do, were your establishment reduced and style of life altered, your creditors would become clamorous; and, what is worse, your relations, on both sides, would be furious at your folly.'

This last consideration was of more weight than any other. We continued the same course of life, our difficulties hourly increasing; so much so, that I often had not a shilling in my purse, as you witnessed at the charity sermon; which sermon appeared to my guilty conscience as if levelled at myself and my unfortunate husband. In other instances, that I might indulge some little benevolence as a woman and a Christian, I was obliged to conceal my name, well aware that

what was becoming in the humble Mrs. Smith would have been considered shabby in the fashionable Mrs. Cleveland; and I employed myself, therefore, in protecting, and not supporting, the poor.

"Again we were on the brink of ruin, and again did Willoughby assist us; and again I talked of the Continent and economy. But Willoughby had recourse to the old arguments for convincing me of the necessity of keeping up appearances till the day when Horace's luck would turn—as it assuredly would. To keep up an outward show of prosperity, he would send me weekly presents of the most costly exotics, which he paid for in my name, and made me other presents, in a similar manner, of trinkets, china, and articles of furniture. Disliking the donor—blushing at the disgraceful proceeding — broken-hearted and yet smiling, I was obliged to accept and appear grateful! The intimate terms on which I was now necessitated to receive Willoughby, made my knowledge and dislike of him to march hand-in-hand; and, at the very time the voice of slander was busy with our names, I sickened at his approach, and with a trembling hand, and most re-

pulsive spirit, wrote, at my husband's desire, the constant invitations to dinner which he felt bound to propose.

"But, however, I need not explain my feelings; you know them by discovering my secret of the masquerade. I acted wrongly as regards that fête; but it matters not now. Knowing that from the voice of masked friendship I should hear much pleasant truth, I resolved to stay away: however, when the day came, I began to feel that restless spirit which constant dissipation without, and discomfort at home, gives, and I resolved to disguise myself and join the party. Knowing, as I did, the histories of so many, I had a fertile field for the exercise of my ill-nature, if I chose to indulge it. It was not with that design that I originally formed the project; but when at the masquerade, and Willoughby in my grasp, I could not resist the opportunity of venting all that gall and bitterness of spirit which was brooding in my heart. I was that evening in particular a prey to sorrow, which almost amounted to despair; for I had heard that Horace, furious at his bad luck in better society, now frequented an inferior club, where very equivocal characters

assembled; and amongst such associates, what hope had I of his long retaining those feelings of morality and integrity which he yet possessed! —to say nothing of the loss of fortune, which was certain."

CHAPTER X.

DEPARTURE.

"But I must hasten to the conclusion of my tale. Why weary you with a detail of things which led to the present crisis—exile and ruin! Shortly after I became acquainted with you, Horace withdrew himself to Paris. He had sustained additional losses at play; and being well aware that Parliament would shortly be dissolved, he deemed it advisable, by Willoughby's counsels, to quit the country, and leave his affairs in our hands to arrange as best we could. For some time Willoughby flattered me with hopes that all could be arranged, if we (his old policy) put a good face upon the matter; and for some time I believed him; but when he again wanted to add to our obligations by lending us money, I remonstrated strongly against the deceptive system I fol-

lowed according to his advice, and which evidently only increased our embarrassments. I expressed myself warmly, perhaps too warmly, for the obliged party. Willoughby had recourse to the old arguments, still pressing his wealth to our assistance. 'No, no,' I exclaimed, 'my husband is greatly too much indebted to you already; I do not wish that you should add to his obligations.' Never shall I forget Willoughby's countenance as I spoke; his eyes became suddenly like two vivid flames, and his cheeks of an ashy paleness.

"'*His obligations!*' he exclaimed, striding towards me as if he would strike me dead by his look,—'*His obligations!*—your husband! what has he to do with the assistance I have afforded you? You alone are my object! He might starve or rot in a gaol, as he richly deserves for his mad folly—for his neglect of such a being as you, for what I care. You, you alone are the cause of my relieving his necessities! The same feelings which actuated me, in proposing to make you my wife, still exist in their fullest force. The same wish to render you happy which made me propose for your hand in the first instance, has since made me fly to *your* aid in the difficulties

your atrocious husband had heaped upon you. Atrocious as he is—hating him as I do—jealous of him as I am — still, I could worship him for having afforded me the opportunity he has done of proving my devotion to *you*. That day when, at Paris, I drew from him the difficulties he was involved in—when I witnessed his despair, heard his groans, and relieved his distresses, was a healing balm for all the misery I had endured on your account. You, the only being I ever loved or even liked!—in whom, as a child, I discovered that perfection of character you have since shown —on whom to have lavished all my wealth and my tenderness would have been felicity more than earthly, you, I repeat, despised me! Infatuated being! Poor as you then were,—neglected, ill-used, and unhappy,—yet for such as me you would not change your condition! whilst afterwards, in wealth and prosperity, you scrupled not to barter them for such as Cleveland! Infatuated being!'

"That I ought to have resented Willoughby's declaration, upbraided him for his opinion of, and treacherous advice to, my husband, and perhaps have summoned the servants to show him

the door, I know many prudent persons (and perhaps yourself amongst that number) would deem the proper and only course for me to have pursued. However, I acted differently. I could not abuse the man to whom we were under pecuniary obligations which it turned me giddy to think of, and whose fault was love; who in a bad temper had an everlasting torment, and who, hated by every one, had thought to find a being in myself to love and be beloved by in return, and found that by no possible means, not by artifice, by threats, by power, by devotion, was that hope likely to be realized. Still there was enough to make his speech highly offensive; and from that moment I resolved, cost what it would, to emancipate myself from the thraldom in which he held me. I deemed it wise, however, for the present to conceal my feelings; and when Willoughby turned again towards me and seemed more composed, I held out my hand with a smile, and said half seriously, half laughingly—

"'My dear Mr. Willoughby, you must mend your manners; you forget that I am married for better for worse, and anything said against my husband is offensive to me; for I love him in

the truest sense of the word, with a fond, foolish woman's affection, spite of poverty, unkindness, neglect, or even disgrace. Pity me, therefore ——'

"' Pity you!" screamed Willoughby with the voice and look of a fiend, and tossing my hand from him —' I pity you not; rather pity me—I am the object of compassion. That love wasted upon him would have been my glory, had fortune been propitious.'

"' Wasted!' I exclaimed; ' wasted! my love is not thrown away.'

"' Such love as yours is as pearls before swine, when bestowed on a gambler.'

"I burst into tears. ' Nothing, nothing shall make me believe that Horace does not love me. His affection I am as assured of as that yonder sun gives light and warmth. Weak, even wicked as his conduct may have been, yet I have never been absent from his thoughts. Miserable and wretched as he has been, did he not always find comfort in my affection? If words can speak the language of love, well do these walls know that he has daily pronounced them; and his letters are tenderness and devotion itself—all in fact that the

utmost extent of woman's vanity, or woman's love, could require !'

" I ceased. Willoughby gazed earnestly at me ; he seemed trying to make an effort to conquer his feelings, but his lip quivered and he was deadly pale. He moved slowly towards the door with a look that I own made me tremble. His rage at length, however, burst forth. ' Fool that you are !' he exclaimed ; ' infatuated idiot ! Your weakness is positively an object of derision, instead of tears. I could find it in my heart to laugh at your absurd folly in loving this madman ! — Madman did I say ?— poor wretch ! to bestow your affections on one who would barter your sweetest smile for the dice-box— to whom the society of Savill is far more congenial than your own, and to whom the atmosphere of a gaming-house is far more familiar than that of his home ! Poor wretch, I do pity you ! I would have saved you, but your fault be upon your own head !—Farewell !' Willoughby left the room—I have never seen him since.

" The next day I sent for Francis Cleveland, whom you had seen with me, and had mistaken for my husband. He had always been very kind

to me, and was much attached to his brother; to him therefore I confided the whole state of our affairs, and requested his advice. According to his counsels, the state of the business was laid before a confidential lawyer, the friend of the family. Secrecy was soon out of the question; for the only step to be taken, as I had long foreseen, was to sell everything that we could dispose of for the benefit of our creditors. I retired to my aunt's house, and Francis took the whole business into his own hands, which he conducted with the utmost delicacy, both as regarded myself as well as his brother; and at the same time satisfied, as well as he could, those to whom we were indebted. He also did more than I required of him; for he warmly espoused my cause, and defended my conduct against the unjust aspersions of old Lady Iceland, who, quite forgetting her original fault in concealing from me her son's losses at play, when we were married, now talked, in all the fulness of her maternal sorrow, of my flirtation with Mr. Willoughby driving her poor dear Horace from his home to the gaming-table; and, to feed my extravagance, the same poor injured being had been obliged to resort to

the Jews. As to how far she was believed or disbelieved, I know not; but I never took the trouble of contradicting her statements.

"To return, however, to Willoughby. After we parted I heard he was ill, some people said dangerously so; I sent several times to inquire after him, and Francis tried to see him, but in vain; about a week back I received the following letter from him:—

"'THE HON. MRS. CLEVELAND,

"'On rising from my bed of sickness, I see your name frequently in the list of those who have inquired after me. I am well aware your motive could not be affection: it may have been pity, courtesy, or even self-interest; for your interest might be furthered by my *sudden* death;—such a motive as the last could not, I will hope, be the case in a woman whom I still regard with the tenderest feelings. Whatever may be the fact, and whether your inquiries be genuine, interested, or assumed, I thank you for them, and in return address you this letter, convinced that what I inform you will give you the utmost satisfaction. We meet no more! Next week I leave England for my estate in the West Indies, and the horses are

already at the door to convey me from London. Rejoice, therefore; the love of Willoughby will never more be put in competition with that of your husband! You want not his affection; and having thought proper to call Mr. Francis Cleveland to your counsels, his friendship is now superfluous. Oh! did you but know my heart!—you *must* have known it, you *must* have seen its inward workings!—But women are perverse and infatuated; they not only love in prosperity and in adversity, but weakly cling to their idol when spurned, trampled on, neglected, and traduced;—yes, I repeat, *traduced!* Did not Cleveland, your *husband*, well know that your fair fame was tarnished by *my* attentions being received? and was he not conveniently deaf to the talk and suspicions of the world, merely to answer his own selfish purposes? Was not *that* traducing you? Do you believe that, had you married me, or had you been prevailed upon to leave this husband for me, such would have been the case? No; no breath of heaven should have blown upon you offensively,—no exertions that man or man's wealth could have called forth to render this world a paradise to you, should have been spared. Such

visions are now over; I now know the truth, though I long tried to believe otherwise. You prefer a prison with a disgraced outcast, to a palace with an adoring slave! Well, act the heroine if you will!—poor, mistaken, unfortunate being as you are!—I could weep, did I not execrate your folly.

"'Thank Mr. Francis Cleveland for his inquiries after me: on the subject of business I shall trouble him, not you. The gift I made your husband was for you, and you alone: you choose to regard it otherwise—be it so. I have relations, or heirs as they style themselves; and though in befriending *you*, their interests would never have been considered, the case is very different as regards your husband. I do not, for his follies, intend to impoverish them or myself. I remain, &c. &c. F. Willoughby.'

"This extraordinary epistle was accompanied by a short note from Mr. Willoughby's lawyer to Francis Cleveland, naming the amount of what his client had advanced to my husband, and requesting a bond for the same with interest, &c. in due legal form!

"I have little more to add," said Mrs. Cleveland. "My estate is at nurse, and managed by trustees. Willoughby is our principal creditor. As soon as I have seen Horace, we shall arrange our future plans; and I trust he will enter into my wishes of retiring to Switzerland, where we may live respectably on the allowance our trustees make us, educate our children, and, after having paid all our debts, regain, I hope, that peace which we have both been long in ignorance of, spite of the glittering surface which has shone deceitfully on our fortunes, concealing aching hearts and the pangs of a wounded conscience!"

"Oh! this abominable, this atrocious House of Commons!" I exclaimed, as I lay in my wretched inn bed, unable to close my eyes. "Oh! my consummate folly! my vanity! my doting credulity! to be talked over into becoming one of the legislators! What had I to do with parliament, or business, or ambition, or even occupation? Am I not arrived at years of discretion and years of repose? After toiling and fighting, starving and complaining, were not my present days sent as a relief?—and to what use

am I going to turn them? Am I not going to act all my life over again, without prospect of benefit to myself, or others, as a stimulus to my exertions? Am I not going to toil, fight, fast, and complain, — and all within the narrow sphere of St. Stephen's, instead of that noble theatre, the world! where, in former days, as an alleviation to much misery, my companions were brave, beloved, spirited, and young as myself,—and to soften our cares we possessed youth's best friend, Hope—a friendship incompatible with *wise* old age! Idiot that I am, to have placed such trammels round me! And in the month of November the parliament meets, and I must take my seat and assist in the arrangement of the affairs of the nation, instead of assisting Mrs. Cleveland in the arrangement of the affairs of her family; and, but for this abominable election, I should have been near her at the time of her distresses in London. I would have arrested the impertinent proceedings of the malicious Willoughby, have silenced the libellous tongue of the superannuated Lady Iceland. But is it too late now to be of use to her? I started up in bed; the day was beginning to dawn: I rang the bell, and on my servant's entry,

told him to go instantly and find out the time Mrs. Cleveland's carriage was ordered, and to have mine ready at the same hour,—and also to take my compliments to Mrs. Cleveland, and I would breakfast with her.

This affair arranged, I arose, and having finished my toilette, descended to the sitting-room, where I had parted from her the night before. In the passage I met the courier. "I presume," said I, addressing myself to him,—"I presume you pay all Mrs. Cleveland's expenses?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sir, then have the goodness, as we are going the same road and at the same time, to take this twenty pound note: pay with it my post-horses, and also the bill here, which includes Mrs. Cleveland's expenses as well as my own."

The courier pocketed the bank note, and departed with a much more satisfied air than when we first met; convincing me that my surmises were right as to Mrs. Cleveland's anxiety to get out of England arising from the limited nature of her funds for the purpose,—as probably the courier was well aware. It was too true: what with small bills delivered at the last moment, and last dona-

tions to favourite objects of charity — to old servants whom she was parting with, and souvenirs to friends she was quitting, poor Mrs. Cleveland had reason to anticipate with no small alarm the missing the Brighton packet to Dieppe, so as to be detained at a Brighton hotel, and even to look rather dismayed when I unthinkingly ordered a bottle of sherry at dinner.

The arrangements for our journey were soon made. I had the satisfaction of handing Mrs. Cleveland into my carriage, leaving Miss Williams to take care of the countless packages her carriage contained. A hint that I gave the postboys made them proceed rapidly, and we reached Brighton just one hour before the packet sailed. The question with me now was—to go, or not to go? Looking at the sea, which was perfectly calm, I thought of my amiable companion, whom I might never meet again—of her distress and misfortunes—and perhaps also of the easy voyage which the weather promised. The question was decided. "Get the carriage instantly on board with all my luggage," I exclaimed to my servant, who waited for no further orders, and did what he was desired. The hour was

soon over, and, with Mrs. Cleveland on my arm, I hurried through the idle throng gaping on the pier into the vessel. We were quickly under weigh, and before long the shores of England were out of view.

As Mrs. Cleveland sat mournfully gazing on the expanse of ocean, the tears stole gently down her cheeks.

"You regret England?" said I.

"It is not regret, but worse—it is remorse that I feel when I think of my native land! There was my heritage thrown; goodly and pleasant, all that the bounty of a beneficent Creator could grant to favoured mortal; and, alas! how used! Where is it now?—scattered to the winds of heaven; whilst I, on whom so much was bestowed, am now a wanderer, leaving no trace behind me, but the having

> 'With superior skill abused the gifts of Providence,
> And squander'd life.'"

"It is not you who are to blame," I observed; "your husband's faults fall not on your head."

"God alone knows!" sighed Mrs. Cleveland meekly. "Did I sufficiently exert the influence I possessed to keep him from error? was my own

conduct sufficiently free from selfishness to shame him into a change in his own? Was it not I who, on our first embarking in life together, encouraged expense, show, and splendour? Horace may be the most to blame, but I am not guiltless."

"I trust that, when you land, your husband will meet you?"

Mrs. Cleveland shook her head.

"Not meet you?" said I.

"He wished it; but we must save every expense, even his journey from Paris."

"Poor thing! that so trifling a consideration should now be a matter of moment to you—you who once possessed such means!"

"Oh! talk not of it. I was resolved to marry Horace; I loved him; and had I then known all that I know now—had I anticipated more than the misery I have endured, I fear that I should have loved him equally, and have married him the same."

Mrs. Cleveland ceased. I thought of the unfortunate Willoughby's feelings, which such sentiments as those just uttered goaded nearly to madness.

It was late when we reached Dieppe; we there-

fore proceeded at once to the hotel. During our voyage I had arranged in my mind that I would accompany Mrs. Cleveland to Paris. Time enough for St. Stephen's afterwards, I thought; and perhaps I shall be none the worse for a little French polish on political matters, any more than a young lady on her first appearance at Almack's is for the lustre which a Parisian milliner bestows.

"Whom have we here?" said I from the hotel window on the following morning, as a smart English carriage drove up to the door amidst the click-clack of the postilions. Mrs. Cleveland approached the window—two gentlemen descended from the carriage. "Heavens! my husband!" she exclaimed. The next moment Horace was in the room, and herself in his arms.

I know not, if my presence had been observed, whether it would have made any difference in the tenderness of his greeting; but, as it was, I was ready to forgive him half his misconduct for the unfeigned pleasure which sparkled in his eyes as again and again he pressed his lips to the face of his wife. "My own Horace!"—"My dearest Mary!" were the only words that could for some

time find utterance. The tears of affection flowed down the soft cheeks of Mrs. Cleveland, whilst in the brilliant eye of her husband trembled that which I was well inclined to place to the account of penitence. He looked care-worn, and when he had time to observe his wife's pale and thin appearance, a deep groan burst from his heart.

"Poor, poor injured being! and injured by me, who swore to protect you! Can you forgive me, Mary?"

"I must forgive you," answered his wife playfully, "as before a witness I cannot but assume a virtue though I had it not."

"A witness! where?"

I now advanced from the deep recess of the window, where I had been standing. Mrs. Cleveland took my hand and presented me to her husband. He started, and with a heightened colour said,

"We have met before."

"And we know the worst of each other," I said.

"Not of *each other*," replied Cleveland mournfully; "for I know no harm of you, beyond the company in which we met,—and that was very ex-

cusable as regards yourself, returning to England after a long absence, ignorant of its society and disliking solitude. But very, very different was the case as regards me!" And Cleveland looked at his wife.

"Well," said I, "you are a lenient judge of character; but as to myself, I must confess, that living anywhere, and I may almost add, with anybody, is no such direful calamity with me as with the more refined and delicate of our species. I knew pretty well the class of individuals whom I met in —— Street, with the exception of yourself, who, I allow, excited my curiosity and my interest; and I must say, that, such as they were, I was not sorry to join them, rather than lead the life of solitude to which all strangers are consigned in the *rich* and *gay* town of London! But enough of this."

"Enough of this indeed," said Mrs. Cleveland; "remember the proverb, 'let by-gones be by-gones:' I only think of the present and future: the past I intend to expunge from my memory."

"Alas!" observed Horace, "why banish from your thoughts the bright spots of your existence,

and why encourage gloom in thinking only of the future ?"

"My dear love, I have not the slightest thoughts of leading a gloomy life in future."

"How can it be otherwise ?"

"Why, as to that, if you *will* be dull and unhappy, I shall be very sorry ; but I see no reason that a very attached pair—which I presume we are —in good health, with good education, young and agreeable, (which I, at least, have the credit of being,) and with three lovely children, and sufficient means to live comfortably, though not splendidly, are to be gloomy and wretched, because, forsooth, they cannot afford to give splendid fêtes ! Instead of being gloomy, Horace, you should rejoice that at last we may live for each other ; that we have got rid of English fogs, noise, and late hours, so as to be positively objects of envy. Are you now convinced, love ?"

Horace smiled languidly, but could not banish the stings of conscience sufficiently to enter into his wife's innocent buoyancy of spirits.

"But I have never asked you how you came here."

"Lord —— offered me a lift, and I could not resist the proposed opportunity of meeting you, dear Mary."

"Lord —— deserves my warmest thanks; — but tell me, Horace, do I not look better than my aunt described me?"

"Yes, you look rather better than when I left you."

"Oh! I shall soon get quite well. It was that horrid hypocritical farce which I was obliged to keep up that nearly killed me. Hating deceit as I do, to have been obliged to live so many months as it were in a mask, was to render myself odious in my own eyes. I detested my own thoughts; I trembled at my own shadow; and, above all, I loathed solitude. Now I am lightened of all my cares, and if——"

"If what, love? I know what you would say, —if Horace will never play again——"

"No, it was not that; for my firm belief is that you never will play again. It was that horrid debt to Willoughby which haunted me."

"Name it not, I implore," said Cleveland, clasping his hands. "Oh, Mary! if you will not

drive me mad, talk no more of that debt—Villain, fool that I have been ! In a few years, however, the trustees will have paid it off; and, by everything that is sacred, I swear that I will never play again."

" Very well," said Mrs. Cleveland ; " Mr. Morland is your witness, and I am satisfied."

CHAPTER XI.

RETURN AND CONCLUSION.

I ACCOMPANIED the Clevelands to Paris, where they were joined by their children. Shortly afterwards they set off for Geneva, and I returned to London. I was more than ever delighted with Mrs. Cleveland, and in great measure reconciled to her husband. Though sobered, he was not soured by his adversity: he was earnestly employed in the arrangement of his affairs, and I was happy to observe that there was much self-denial in his proceedings; at the same time he appeared anxious in the extreme for his wife to amuse herself in any possible way that their finances would allow of. Her wishes were moderate in that respect, and, except an occasional dinner *en ville*, she went nowhere but to the theatres, where I had a box.

On my arrival in London, I took my seat in

the House of Commons, voted on most questions to some good purpose, and spoke on a few to no purpose at all. At Christmas I went into the country to my cousin Kate, where I remained until parliament again met, when I resumed my attendance until the session was over. About ten days after that event restored me to liberty, Francis Cleveland and myself were rapidly descending the Jura mountains, leaving behind us that hideous country so miscalled *La belle France*, and viewing before us lovely Switzerland.

With cracking whips and clattering hoofs we soon were winding through the lanes which lead to Secheron, when we espied in a *char-à-banc*, with Horace and their eldest child, my dear Mrs. Cleveland. In a moment we were out of the carriage, and joined them. Their house, one of those very pretty *campagnes* which surround Geneva, was not very distant. We did not return to the carriages, but with Mrs. Cleveland on one arm, and her daughter on the other, I preceded the two brothers.

"You are happy then here?" said I, as we walked slowly on.

"Perfectly so; and do you know that we live

with such economy, that I verily believe in a few years we shall have paid off all our debts, most particularly that odious one to Willoughby. Horace is so very happy here! We drink tea, dance and sing with our neighbours of all countries, amongst whom are some very agreeable persons. Then in the morning we rise early, educate the children, and walk or drive out after dinner; for, happily, late hours are unknown at Geneva. Now that you and Francis are come, we will make excursions to the mountains. So, having told you all our proceedings, pray tell me some in return about London, and a few of its inhabitants, especially my good aunt."

"I shall leave their own letters, of which I have brought you a good store, to speak for themselves; but I have one also of more importance from Mr. Willoughby's lawyer."

"Mr. Willoughby's lawyer! What can he write about? Surely he cannot be impatient for the principal of his debt. I thought the trustees had arranged it all, as to the periods of payment."

"There is the letter, however," said I, assum-

ing a serious air: "read it, and discover its contents."

Mrs. Cleveland tore the letter hastily open: within the envelope was a note, enclosing a receipt for the whole amount of Cleveland's debt to Willoughby.

"What can this mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Cleveland. "Who has done this? and how can this receipt have been procured? Surely Horace —— But no, it is impossible he could have paid the money without my knowing it."

"Horace knows no more of the matter than yourself."

"Then who can have been our secret benefactor?" — when suddenly, with the colour rising to her cheeks and the tears in her eyes, she said, "There is only one person who could have acted the kind Samaritan's part so well; — he who paid my poor father's debts — who delivered Williams from a prison, and now stands before me, must be our too kind and constant benefactor!"

As she spoke, she caught me by the hand, which she carried to her lips. Her husband and Francis Cleveland came to us at the same moment; and I

saw by the happy countenance of the former, that his brother had anticipated the information I had to deliver.

" O Horace, we are no longer exiles, no longer in debt, no longer poor ! Behold and thank your benefactor. But still, can we, ought we to accept his bounty ?"

" If Mr. Morland will not be offended at the proposition, I should suggest ——"

" I know exactly what you would suggest," I interrupted Cleveland : " you would talk of payment, and transfer Willoughby's account to me ; —that cannot be, for I have given you his receipt, consequently the debt is cancelled between you ; and as I never lent you any money, you can have no debt with me. But if you are both too proud to accept favours unrequited, I will tell you the return you can make. I have the misfortune to be a childless, and, I had almost said, friendless old man, who, having survived many friends, and nearly all his relations, with one solitary exception, has, by the bequests of the first, and the course of law as to the last, added to his troubles the misfortune of being rich. I stand alone amidst my heaps of gold ; but alone I do

not wish to die. Some younger hand must close my eyes, something more soothing to my feelings must meet my fading sight than the face of mercenaries or the chests containing my wealth. For the gold, therefore, that I give you, requite me with your friendship. Let your home be my home, your children my children, your people my people. Grant this request, and I would willingly resign all the gifts which fickle Fortune has been pleased to heap, with a bounteous though tardy hand, on one who for many years had known her only in frowns — or more properly storms."

"Generous, noble-minded man!" exclaimed Mrs. Cleveland, "too happy shall I be if, in the filial attention of Horace and myself, you can receive any return for your kindness to us, who, alas! have not only your bounty to ourselves as a weight of gratitude almost too great to repay, but, in addition, have my father's."

"No more, I beg. As a first step towards showing your wish to give me pleasure, let the word gratitude never pass your lips again as regards anything I have done for you; which, after all, is no great thing, did you know the simplicity of my habits, or the extent of my means.

As to having paid your father's debts after his death—a secret I intended to have died with me—why, he was the original benefactor. When he landed in India, poor as he was, at that moment I was still poorer, and he assisted me. I was sick also, and he took care of me. A short time afterwards, circumstances had arisen which placed me in great affluence. I was then separated from poor Clairfield, and when we again met, it was too late for him to profit by my wealth—he was dying! Still I could sit by his bed-side; and when I received his last breath, which he drew in these arms, he was comforted by the assurance that I would discharge every debt that he had in the world, and that his children, if they required assistance, should find in me a parent. I heard afterwards, through the Governor of Madras, that poor Clairfield's only remaining child had inherited a large fortune; and, satisfied with that intelligence, I at the time made no further inquiries. Now, however, I trust to having redeemed that promise; though I fear my original motive for so doing was not the spirit of generosity, gratitude or charity, but the spirit of—curiosity!"

Six years have elapsed since I wrote the above. I am no longer in parliament. Willoughby succeeded me in representing the borough of Ashbridge; therefore, some of my wealth continued to flow, though indirectly, through the hands of Messrs. Cash and Co. My time is chiefly passed between my good cousin Kate's and the Clevelands'. Though such things are deemed impossible, I believe Horace Cleveland to be radically cured of his passion for play. I believe it, because he is rich and happy, and rendering all around him the same; which could not be the case did the love and habit of play still exist in him; for, of those who play, few can be rich, whilst none can be truly happy.

THE ST. CLAIRS.

" La fortune fait paroître nos vertus et nos vices comme la lumière fait paroître les objets."

THE ST. CLAIRS.

CHAPTER I.

On the evening of the 13th of ——, 18—, Captain William Crawford, after having looked to the well-being of the remnant of his troop — sad symbol of glory dearly purchased on the morn !— drew his cloak around him, and once more bent his steps to the gory field.

Many a brave fellow who, but a few hours before, had followed him to the charge, now lay stiff and cold ! — others, with hearts still clinging to a world in which all their hopes and joys had centred, with bodies agonized by pain, and minds distracted by surrounding scenes of blood—now first beheld, yawning to receive them, that dread eternity, till then so little thought of !

To such, Crawford could only give a passing sigh, and fervent prayer for their speedy release from misery, as he passed on to the spot where his devoted regiment had fought that morning, in which regiment it seemed next to miraculous that he and a few more should have survived. It was a sickening sight around him; but, as he had seen such before, he came not to display his sensibility, but humanity—not to moralize, but to act — to assist the living, if such there were, and not to weep for the dead.

" It was in heading the charge," said Crawford, " that St. Clair fell. I saw his upraised arm sink powerless by his side. I knew he was struck, for in another moment his horse rushed across me without a rider—it could not be far from hence." Crawford called aloud, in hope of some feeble reply, " Edward St. Clair!"—His voice echoed awfully over the field of dead. Again he pronounced the name of his friend—" Edward St. Clair!—it is Crawford calls!" This time his cry was not unheeded, for a faint groan was heard, and a feeble voice exclaimed, — " If a friendly hand be near, give me a drop of water, for the love of Heaven, to quench my parched lips."

Crawford turned to the spot whence the voice proceeded, and there beheld the countenance of one with whom he was well acquainted.

"Poor Reynolds! is it you?" and approaching him, he knelt by his side, and gently raised his head. "Who is it speaks?" inquired the wounded man. "It cannot be Captain St. Clair?"

"No, it is Crawford;" and he moistened the soldier's lips from the flask of brandy-and-water he had the precaution to bring with him.

"Thank you, sir," said the wounded man: "but my own captain, where is he? I saw the ball strike his side — I shot the rascally Frenchman; but I was wounded myself in another moment. I tried to crawl where my officer lay; but it was beyond my strength. I cannot tell why, but when I heard your voice, I thought it was his;—my head was confused, I suppose—it is better now."

"You know then where St. Clair lies?" demanded Crawford eagerly.

"It cannot be far from here," replied Reynolds; "he fell just by a single chestnut-tree—it

is so dark, or my eyes are so dim, that I cannot make it out."

"I see it well."

"Then pray, sir, take no thought of me; look after him, I beg."

"In a moment; but first, my good fellow, I must do what I can for your welfare."

"You can do nothing for me but put me into the earth. What use will life be to me, sir, without my precious limb! I know it must go, even if your kindness saves my life."

"We will hope for the best, Reynolds. In the mean time, be tranquil, whilst I go and seek for my poor friend."

Having placed the wounded soldier in the position most easy to his shattered leg, Crawford hastened to the spot directed, where, beneath the solitary chestnut-tree, withered and dying, like all around from the combat of the morn, lay the object of his search, pale and motionless, but life still marked by a small, tremulous pulse. In opening his dress to give him air, the blood oozed slowly from the fatal wound in the chest. To fan the faint embers of returning life, Crawford had recourse to the slender means in his power;

and the gentle pressure of his hand in recognition, and as proof of returning life, gave him a momentary satisfaction almost amounting to joy.

St. Clair turned his heavy eyes towards his friend, who ventured to address him with an inquiry as to his hurt.

" My hurt is to death," faintly said the dying man.

" God forbid !"

" Rather, God's will be done !"

A pause ensued. St. Clair seemed gradually to revive ; but Crawford's experience made him guess too well, from the nature of the wound, that it must be mortal.

" Is there anything I can do for you, St. Clair ?—have you anything to say ? I promise to obey your most minute wishes, and to do all in my power for you, living or dead."

" You are very good." Then, after collecting breath, he continued, " I have two poor boys in England—orphans they soon will be—take them to my brother St. Clair, when you return home, and ask him to be kind to them for my sake ; implore him to befriend them—to look after their morals and education, and to protect the little

fortune they possess. I do not doubt his affection to myself; but my dying wishes must find a passage to his heart for my poor children, if they could not have reached it otherwise. There are others of the family to whom I could wish to recommend them; for, without parents, they cannot have too many friends: but I doubt not their love, for my sake—we were ever an attached family."

Poor St. Clair ceased. Crawford promised to fulfil all his desires, and added—"Humble as I am compared to those you name, yet if they all desert them, so will not I; if others fail them, my means shall be their means, my home shall be their home."

"They cannot fail," sighed St. Clair,—"they cannot desert their own blood: but if they do," he added with renewed energy, "may you befriend them, and may your reward be all the love, duty, and gratitude that generous natures are capable of, and of which others will be undeserving. You can tell them how I died . . . . . and if their profession be that of arms, tell them . . . . ." here St. Clair's voice became thick. Crawford pressed his friend's hand to his breast as he mur-

mured in his dying ear—"I will tell them to be all their father was before them; to unite, like him, the bravery of a soldier to the tenderness of a woman; that, living, they may be equally beloved, and, dying, as sincerely mourned." Crawford ceased. No answer was returned—the noble spirit had flown to Him who gave it!

Captain St. Clair was buried with military honours, by the side of his brave companions. Reynolds, surviving the amputation of his leg, was sent home.

Too soon for his professional tastes, was Crawford enabled to fulfil his friend's wishes. Whilst the skeleton of his regiment remained on the coast for reinforcements, he himself was ordered to join the depôt in England. As an individual, it was a cruel ending to a brilliant campaign; and Crawford could hardly help feeling as if disgraced, when he bade farewell to his comrades, and bent his solitary steps towards home. Most bitterly did he curse the cowardice of our allies, to whom the destruction of his gallant regiment was owing. With the wealth of England lavished on their persons, in the shape of clothing, arms, and food,—in a cause

which was their own, and on their native soil,—did these chivalrous and high-spirited people* throw down their maiden swords and fly! leaving the regiment they were to support to defend a post against thrice their numbers. They did defend it—but at what price has been already shown! The conduct of the Spaniards was glossed over, and a hint given to Crawford to be more measured in the abuse which, in vengeance for those who had fallen, he hurled upon the Spanish nation in every society he entered, and most particularly on one individual, who, in his willingness to die many times before his death rather than meet the fate of the truly brave, had been the first to flee.

Immediately on his landing in England, Crawford wrote to Lord St. Clair, to whom the event of his brother's death was already known, giving the particulars of his last moments, and expressing his own desire to fulfil his friend's wishes by presenting to him his orphan nephews in person. A very amiable letter was returned by Lord St. Clair. He expressed much kind feeling both as regarded the deceased and his children, whom he should ever look upon in the light of sons. He

* Vide all the newspapers of the day.

was, at the present writing, at his house in the country for the approaching holidays; and if Captain Crawford would do him the honour to pay him a visit and accompany his nephews, he should be most happy to have the opportunity of forming his acquaintance. In short, the letter was a very pleasing performance; it quite satisfied Crawford; and, before he had half read the complimentary expressions with which it concluded, he had ordered a chaise, and in less than a quarter of an hour was on his road to Twickenham, where the boys were at school.

The St. Clairs were a handsome race, and Edward's wife had been a lovely woman. When, therefore, the master of the school pointed out as their children the two best-looking boys of about twenty others in the play-ground, he only confirmed a fact which Crawford had previously arranged in his own mind to be the case.

The master having introduced Crawford to them as their father's friend, a shade of feeling immediately overcast the brow of each boy at the announcement.

"You remember your father, do you not, my little men?" inquired Crawford.

"Oh yes!" replied the boys; "we remember him well, and poor dear mamma too;" the tears filling their eyes as they spoke at the thought of their mother's never-to-be-forgotten kindness. She had been dead about a year; and the impression of her tenderness from their cradles to her grave was too indelibly grafted on their affectionate minds to be ever effaced. Their father they had comparatively known little of; he had been long absent at the time of his death; their love for him was consequently more in obedience to their mother's desires than from their own knowledge.

"You are good boys, I am quite sure," said Crawford kindly, "and well deserve the indulgence I am about to ask for you, namely, to be allowed to anticipate the period of your holidays a short time, and to carry you with me to your uncle Lord St. Clair's, where in future your home will be."

Smiles at the announcement of holidays soon chased the tears from their eyes; and when they were further informed that the carriage actually waited to convey them away, they made but one spring from the play-ground into the house, there to make their preparations and announce the news.

The schoolmaster followed them with his eye, and then turning to Crawford, said, "Such is the thoughtlessness of youth,—they rejoice in quitting an old, indolent, indulgent tutor such as I am, to encounter far more severe, though perhaps instructive taskmasters. Change! the love of change is inherent in our natures, till age and experience teach the bitter lesson, which as a proverb and a copy are usually inculcated in vain—'the going further and faring worse."

Captain Crawford was a man formed to ingratiate himself with children; and the youths having listened with the deepest interest, and more feeling than Crawford had expected to arouse, to the details of their father's death, during the early part of their journey, were cheered the remainder by less touching details of military life, which, to confess the truth, were as agreeable to the captain to relate as to the boys to hear. In this manner they travelled on with mutual satisfaction to St. Clair Abbey.

Edward and Arthur St. Clair were at this period nine and ten years of age. They were handsome, as it has been already observed, with what does not always accompany beauty, and will some-

times even attach itself to ugliness—the bearing and stamp of gentle blood. A person may be intrinsically good without being so distinguished, and intrinsically bad though so favoured. Yet still the absence of vulgarity is a blessing on nature's part not to be despised, and as precious, both as regards person and mind, as its possession is unfortunate to those who are doomed its victims. In other respects the boys appeared to Crawford, as far as his study of a day went, to be amiable, with some intelligence and a great deal of ignorance; they had no vanity nor ill nature, though sufficiently fond of recounting their own exploits, and not disinclined to mingle them with the disasters of their companions. His interest in his young friends hourly increased; so much so, that when they found themselves at the close of their journey in a splendid drive through noble woods, a part of the St. Clair Abbey domain, he abruptly demanded of the boys what family their uncle had?

"Three," was the reply.

"All boys, I would lay my life."

"Oh no—girls—that is, two are girls, and the baby."

"And what is the baby?"

Neither of the boys knew; they could only tell *it* wore a blue sash, *it* was a very nice little thing, and *it* was made a great fuss with.

"A young heir, I would take my oath," said Crawford.

"Very likely," answered the boys, without in the least knowing what a heir meant.

After various sweeps, and turns, and hills, and dales, and three times traversing a meandering stream, first by a rustic, secondly by a Gothic, and thirdly by a Grecian bridge, the travellers stood by the door of what was anciently an abbey, now a respectable and extensive pile of stones, with nothing of Gothic to be discovered except in the pointed arches of the French windows, extending along one of the fronts, which opened upon a terrace-walk. The carriage drew up opposite a flight of steps leading to a glass door, through which appeared a large fire, giving warmth and light in a huge fireplace surmounted by a pair of gigantic stag's horns. The scene was in due time further enlivened by the appearance of a liveried servant, who, with measured tread, crossed the hall, and descending the steps, proceeded to open the chaise-door, and give the strangers welcome.

When once in the house, it seemed to Crawford that there was no end to the apartments they traversed ere they reached that destined for their reception. However, having left behind a library, billiard-room, print-room, and nondescript parlour, the servant made his bow and closed the door upon the travellers, in a gallery sixty feet by thirty, the furthest extremity opening into a conservatory; in which spacious apartment it was necessary to cast a searching look around, in order to ascertain that they were the only living creatures therein.

Crawford drew near the fire, muttering something about ostentation. The boys crept close to him, rather intimidated by the splendour, space, and silence around.

In the course of time, Lord St. Clair appeared. He was a fine-looking man, in the prime of life. His task was easy to perform, and he did it well, as was usually the case with his lordship with regard to the ceremonies of life, which comprised the greater part of his actions; for to him everything was a matter of form: he could not, therefore, be otherwise than perfect in the part. He extended both hands to each of his nephews in

turn, and gave a prolonged shake, with his head slightly bent forwards. To Crawford he gave only one hand; his head was thrown further back, and the shake was of short duration. He expressed, however, the utmost pleasure in making Captain Crawford's acquaintance; stated his intention of doing everything in his power for his orphan nephews; his sorrow that their mutual loss should require such fatherly protection; his hope that they were not fatigued; that if hungry they would command refreshment; that they would not hurry their toilets, but that the dinner-hour was nearly arrived, and Lady St. Clair retired to dress. The conclusion of the whole discourse was the most welcome to his hearers; namely, that the late melancholy event had closed his doors upon all strangers for the present; they were merely a family party, amongst whom, however, was an acquaintance of his nephews, a youth bearing the same affinity to himself, Ernest St. Clair, their cousin. His lordship also added, turning to Crawford, "I trust you will not feel yourself quite isolated amongst us, as one of your profession, a relation of Lady St. Clair's, is now here."

With this parting information Lord St. Clair

retired, making way for the groom of the chambers, who escorted the guests to the rooms prepared for them.

The gallery was a splendid apartment, and when, on re-entering it before dinner, its fine proportions and costly furniture, no longer obscured by a fickle blazing fire mingled with the dull twilight, were displayed to the utmost advantage by numerous brilliant lamps, Crawford thought he had never seen so beautiful an apartment before. For a moment he paused in admiring astonishment: the next, a far greater surprise met his eye — the large company therein assembled! A very sufficient reason for a family party existed, and Crawford had taken it for granted that, by family, Lord St. Clair equally meant to describe small, — a most egregious error on the stranger's part. For an instant he imagined he was in a dream, as the nodding plumes and jewels—in short, all the paraphernalia of *grande toilette*—met his view on the persons of at least a dozen females, many of whom, to be sure, were in black; but in the dress of an elderly lady, with three grenadier-looking daughters, every colour of the rainbow seemed to vie for preeminence.

Crawford was really alarmed, and for once hesitated to advance: happily, Lord St. Clair came to his aid, and begging to make him known to the company, led him forwards; first to Lady St. Clair, which ceremony performed, he swept rapidly over the rest of the society; who consisted of the Countess of Denmark and her three daughters, the mother and sisters of Lady St. Clair; a whole family of Egertons, distant relations of the St. Clairs, in honour of which blood each young lady had a black sash and black necklace for their cousin Edward: Mr. William St. Clair, Lord St. Clair's brother; another brother, a prebendary in the church, with his wife, a pale-faced son, Ernest, and a pale-faced daughter, Anne; Lord St. Clair's two sisters, Mrs. Willis and Miss St. Clair, with Mrs. Willis's companion Miss Croak; Sir George and Lady Carey, his cousins; an uncle of Lady St. Clair, and his pet bull-dog; three cousins, in the shape of Colonel A—, Mr. B—, and Sir Francis C—; who, with the chaplain, the governess, and two or three odd men, "always there in the shooting season," formed the aggregate amount of this "family party!"

By the time dinner was announced, Crawford

in some measure understood his company. Then ensued a long filing-off of the ladies and their respective beaux; old, young, and middle-aged walked forth as they best might to partake of the anxiously-expected dinner, the rear being brought up by Lady St. Clair, supported by Crawford, who, as the stranger, was appointed to the post of honour.

At dinner, general conversation was impossible, and private discourse apparently not much the order of the day. Excepting, therefore, a giggling whisper between the two boys and their pale-faced cousins, nothing was heard but the noise which appertains to the business of eating, with occasional sounds of—"May I have the honour of drinking a glass of wine?"—or, "Colonel, a glass of wine?"—or, "Will your ladyship do me the pleasure?"—or, "St. Clair, champagne?"—or the more humble and laboured address of the chaplain to one of the young ladies, "Miss Julia, may I be permitted to prescribe a little excess in a glass of exhilarating champagne?"

With the dessert conversation flourished rather more. Lady St. Clair grew somewhat animated upon the subject of the culture of pines, address-

ing herself to Crawford; Lord St. Clair became eloquent on the subject of mangel-wurzel, addressing himself to the company. In due time the ladies withdrew; in half an hour the gentlemen followed. Coffee was drunk; cards and billiards ensued. At ten o'clock the boys were sent to bed, after being severally embraced by all their relations; and at half-past eleven, Crawford, in a less public manner, thought himself at liberty to follow their steps, and, retiring to his chamber, sank to rest beneath a canopy of blue silk, with a confused notion hovering in his mind, that of all the dull evenings he had ever spent, the one just concluded was the dullest. He had not come to any decided conclusion as to where the fault lay, whether it was in himself or others:—if with the latter, the misfortune was incurable; but if the blame rested with himself, better acquaintance might improve matters, and therefore he would endure twenty-four hours more ere he gave up the cause in despair. With this resolve he went to sleep, and with this resolve he arose on the following morning.

CHAPTER II.

Not only twenty-four hours, but thrice twenty-four hours did Crawford remain as guest at St. Clair Abbey. Not that his pleasure in the society increased; but he was induced so to do in order to ascertain the fact as to the well-being of his two *protégés*, Edward and Arthur St. Clair. As far as worldly good went, the scrutiny on this point was favourable,—the whole family seemed to be actuated by a spirit of rivalry as to which should most befriend the orphan boys. Their home in future was to be with Lord St. Clair, and their place of education Eton; but all their uncles and aunts put in a claim for some share of the "*dear*" boys' holidays; and Mrs. Willis was so peremptory, that for the ensuing Easter vacation they were to be resigned to her. She was rich, a widow, and childless; so no one dared gainsay her desire. In the mean while they were overwhelmed

with presents and surfeited by amusement; their beauty was a constant theme of discourse, and all their homely sayings were recorded as wit; and but for the prospect of those distant spires which Gray has so beautifully commemorated, Crawford would have thought it a duty to his departed friend, to save his children from the ruin of indulgence, rather than that of neglect; and this feeling induced him one evening to hint as much to Miss St. Clair. This lady was the only person of the family with whom his acquaintance had not remained stationary after the first introduction. She had originally attracted his notice, by reason of her being the only one of all his relations from whose eyes tears had fallen when her brother Edward's death was reverted to. This solitary instance of feeling drew Crawford instantly towards her, with the wish of knowing more of one whose heart seemed still to retain some tenderness for him who, to the rest of the family, was as if he had never been: to her, in consequence, he imparted his fears of the boys' being spoiled by the lavish kindness of their relations.

Miss St. Clair raised her eyes slowly from her work at the conclusion of Crawford's address, and

directing them with deliberation to where the boys were engaged in a noisy round game of cards, said,—" It seems they are the fashion. Well, do not grudge them their present enjoyment—happiness is short-lived. I remember when their father was just as great an object of importance !"

" Indeed ! that is the best defence possible of the system with regard to them. If they resemble their father, it is all I desire ; and if they are only treading in his steps, I shall have no alarm—it must turn to good."

" What good ?" demanded Miss St. Clair in a manner almost to startle by its abruptness.

" What good !" replied Crawford, half smiling at her question. " Why, the good which is produced by being generous, manly, high-spirited, and friendly ; beloved during life, and lamented after death !"

" Lamented after death !" and Miss St. Clair fixed her large dark eyes on Crawford's face with an expression he could not mistake ; and then, before they regained her work, she moved them in slow and grave survey around the company. " Who laments him ?" Crawford was silent.

Miss St. Clair continued: "You know as well as myself, that Edward is as much forgotten in this, the abode of his family, as though he had never existed."

"No, I do not know it!" answered Crawford half angrily; for there was a bitterness in her manner, totally at variance with the tone of his feelings.

"Then, if you have not made the discovery, you are short-sighted indeed, and are to be envied for your want of that discernment which, after all, is a gift less productive of pleasure than pain to its possessor." Miss St. Clair ceased, as if she cared not to continue the discourse: Crawford, however, replied,

"I would certainly rather see the bright side of human nature than the dark, and would therefore much more willingly conclude, that the apparent indifference to the memory of my poor comrade arises more from the sacrifice necessary to the forms of society, than from want of feeling or natural affection."

Miss St. Clair's lip quivered. "You are too good for us," she said, affecting to speak lightly in order to conceal the emotion she felt:

" the St. Clairs are cold as the ice on Alpine steeps."

" Edward was not cold,—you are not cold."

" Edward was an exception."

" And are not you also? supposing even your harsh judgment of the rest of the family to be correct."

" Harsh judgment!—supposing!" said Miss St. Clair almost wildly; " do I not know them? In them, pride and the love of wealth and power usurp the whole dominion of their hearts. In such, no place can be found for any one feeling that does not minister to their predominant passions. Self is their idol; and the selfish have no affections, no feelings, no heart; and the St. Clairs are a cold, proud ——"

" Hospitable race," interrupted Crawford, smiling: " let me say one good word for them."

" If you like to apply that term to ostentation and hatred of solitude, you are welcome. But our *tête-à-tête* may attract hearers, so we had better cease; and my assistance is wanted at the tea-table. You appear horror-stricken at all I have said: if you give credit to my words, you will be under no alarm at the over-indulgence of the

St. Clairs towards those two boys. Believe me, the hearts now so apparently devoted to them would not weigh one ounce the heavier if to-morrow's sun were to rise on their graves."

Crawford shuddered. Miss St. Clair moved towards the tea-table; and, for the next hour, was employed in distributing that beverage, with an air that might have poisoned the refreshment she solicited the guests to partake of.

For once Crawford spent a sleepless night. Miss St. Clair's harsh manner and bitter words haunted his usually placid mind. With the early dawn he arose, and, profiting by the fineness of the morning, determined to shake off, by a walk, the disagreeable impression which the conversation of the previous evening had left. As he traversed the hall, he met the chaplain, who, finding out his object, offered himself as a companion. Accordingly they sallied forth together. They talked as men talk—of game, hunting, and such like rural and English topics, for some time; when, as Crawford wished, the conversation turned upon the St. Clairs. The politic chaplain lauded them up to the skies. The flattery was, however, a little too obvious to be a decided

contradiction to Miss St. Clair's opinions. Crawford praised their appearance; but observed, that the ladies of the family had not such good reason to be grateful for the favours of nature as the gentlemen. Mrs. Willis was decidedly plain; and Miss St. Clair's eyes, though fine, were so little in keeping with the rest of her appearance, as to be rather disadvantageous than otherwise.

"And yet," said the chaplain, "Miss St. Clair's eyes were once but little thought of, in comparison with her form and features."

"Indeed!"

"Ay, and she was as gay as a lark too."

"That is still more extraordinary; for I never saw a face in which melancholy and gravity—I might add severity, are now more strongly depicted."

"Very true, sir, very true; yet I can remember when her presence inspired universal joy, and when every youth in the neighbourhood was in love with her."

"How comes it, then, she is not married?"

"Oh, Lord, sir! she might have married fast enough; but she fell in love—it was a sad story—with a young man who was tutor to her eldest

brother. They secretly corresponded, and when of age she was resolved to marry him. The affair was discovered or suspected; and, whilst they were both from home, their writing-cases were broken open; and, sure enough, there were proofs sufficient of their engagements in volumes of letters. Egerton never set foot in the house again, as you may well imagine, and she was sent to a relation in Scotland. I lost sight of her for several years; but, when I again saw her, she was completely an altered being — her beauty and spirits fled!"

"Poor thing!" observed Crawford; "her early disappointment is an excuse for the bitterness of her present remarks. What became of her lover?"

"Oh, poor fellow! he returned to college, to read hard, in hopes of obtaining some honours, to render him worthy of her he loved, if, at the death of her father, she still remained constant. His efforts were fruitless, and only accelerated a consumptive tendency to which he was always inclined. He died,—some people say, however, not before a stolen visit to Scotland, when he and Miss St. Clair were secretly united. Be it as

it may, the conduct of her family, (though they acted as people of rank should,) and the death of her lover, which she never scrupled to lay at their door, broke her spirit completely. She generally spends a few weeks here every year; but her home is in Scotland, where she lives very retired, associating only with two or three persons, the remnants of the old puritanical race, whose doctrines she seems to have imbibed, if I may judge from the animadversions she frequently indulges in with regard to my performance on Sundays and festivals, which she makes free to consider as far too lenient and conciliatory.

Crawford was better satisfied after this conversation. Miss St. Clair's severity was accounted for; and he trusted that she judged through the medium of her own sombre mind, and not as the St. Clairs deserved to be decided upon. After all, she might be either right or wrong; but, of his own feelings towards them, Crawford could be under no mistake. They bored him, and he did not suit them. As to the colonel, the person of the society whom Lord St. Clair had particularly selected for his notice, he was,

of all people in the world, a man most repugnant to Crawford's feelings as a companion or comrade. A colonel younger than himself, who had never seen a shot fired, was enough to taint with disgrace a whole society by his presence; and Crawford was thankful to the size of the party, which enabled him to avoid all immediate intercourse with so discreditable a personage; who, however, to do him justice, was equally harmless in the cabinet as the field: his very existence might, indeed, have been forgotten, but for an occasional snore, which, bursting from the depth of an arm-chair by the fire side, called forth a responsive growl from the bull-dog in the corresponding seat opposite. This growl and snore over, the colonel fell back into his customary insignificance.

The day of Crawford's departure, he sought his two young friends, to take leave and gently insinuate some parting admonitions. The boys clung to him with an affection that showed they were as yet unspoiled by prosperity.

"Why do you go? Do you not like being here? I thought you would have remained all the holidays. I know my uncle expected it. Do

not you like him? Is he not good-natured?" uttered both the boys.

"He is the best uncle I ever saw," replied Crawford; "but he will spoil you."

"Oh, no! that is impossible."

"Very well; be it so; so much the better. But remember one thing: spite of all your present enjoyments, you are only two poor orphan boys; when you are men, you must earn your bread, just like your poor father and the rest of us." The boys looked incredulous. "You do not believe me?"

"Yes, we do; but we have now much more money than cousin Ernest, and——"

"Well, well, I hope you may always be as well off. But let me tell you, the possession of wealth is nothing—it is the use to which it is applied. The poor man who, out of five shillings, gives away one to a more distressed being than himself, is far more noble and far superior to him who spends on himself forty-nine shillings out of fifty. So, *beware of selfishness.*" And Crawford, actuated perhaps a little by his conversation with Miss St. Clair, spoke more sternly than was his wont. The boys, evidently struck

by his manner, answered earnestly, "We will indeed."

"Poor children! it will be for your own good in the end."

"And for others too, I hope," answered Edward. "Do not think us forgetful or cold-hearted; for all the money our uncles and aunts have given us has not been spent upon ourselves, as you will find, I am afraid, when you get into the carriage; and possibly you may then wish we had not been so generous."

"How so?"

"Shall I tell, Arthur?"

"Yes; but pray, Captain Crawford, do not be angry at our crowding your carriage."

"Well then," continued Edward, "you will find a large parcel in it; somehow the things would not get into a smaller one, and they are some presents for our old schoolmaster, his sister, and our schoolfellows. We had no time to wish them good-bye; and so we thought they might think it unkind, as we shall not go back to that school any more. When we were there, most of the boys had more money than ourselves, and used to share their playthings with Arthur and me; and

their friends used to give us money sometimes, and Mrs. Willes never went to London without bringing us back a great quantity of gingerbread nuts; so ——"

"My dear good boys," interrupted Crawford, his eye glistening with pleasure, "make no excuses for what I am charmed with you for doing. If the carriage were loaded to suffocation, I would not blame you. Continue to have the same grateful spirit and desire to oblige, and you will be blessed yourself, and a blessing to others. God protect you!"

Crawford departed. Excepting the boys, no one experienced any regret; and to Lady St. Clair his absence was rather a relief—it placed Sir Frederick by her side at dinner, a person much more to her taste. Crawford had never praised anything but the baby—a lovely little girl of four years old, who appeared daily with the fruit. Sir Frederick was a far more general admirer, and, in a smooth stream of oily superlatives, could overflow her mind of vacuity to a state of positive enchantment. Most fortunate, therefore, was Lady St. Clair in such a neighbour; for, vain of everything she possessed, she was equally greedy of admiration

as regarded the meanest or the most noble of her concerns: the burning of her wax-candles, or the mental lights which ornamented the library shelves; the abbey, or the abbey smoke-jack; the stables, or the stables' hayloft,—all were open to encomiums in her eyes; not to proffer which, as in Crawford's case, was as great a dereliction on the score of propriety in her ladyship's ideas, as the approaching majesty without removing one's hat, or the knight's lady contriving to shuffle in to dinner before the lady of a knight of the garter.

Miss St. Clair saw Crawford depart from her window. She had once meditated descending to wish him good-bye. "It is as well as it is," she said, turning from the window as he drove away, and casting her eyes on the mirror opposite. "The adieu of a soured old maid he will think himself lucky to have escaped: the pressure of this skeleton hand can impart nothing but disgust."

CHAPTER III.

About fourteen years after the events alluded to in our last chapter, a lovely girl was seated at her toilette table in a pleasant apartment, neatly furnished with a lively chintz. A smart looking abigail stood behind her, occupied in twisting to some fanciful form a profusion of dark brown hair, whilst the lady herself was employed in the contemplation of a delicious bouquet which had been just delivered to her with—"Edward St. Clair's love."

"He is returned, and perhaps may be at the ball—and will dance with me," thought Ellen.

The ball was brilliant, and Ellen St. Clair's hand was sought for by all the most fashionable of the day; but never granted without a lingering, longing look towards the door of the apartment, in hopes of seeing him whom to have danced with once she would willingly have sat still the whole

remainder of the evening: but he came not. Ellen danced languidly, her conversation was absent, and she returned home to pronounce the ball dull, and to wonder why "Cousin Edward" chose to stay away. Cousin Edward explained the reason very satisfactorily the next day—he had not been asked. This little elucidation took place in the park when Edward St. Clair attended Ellen and Lord St. Clair on horseback.

"Now St. Clair is come back," said Lord Marston, regarding Edward and his cousin as they cantered by, "it is vain to think of approaching Ellen: there he is, always at her bridle rein, and the little thing blushing and laughing every second at the soft nothings he is whispering in her ear. I wonder how it will end."

"End!" said Mr. Orde, who was standing by, and chose to consider the speech addressed to himself, though in fact Lord Marston was only soliloquising aloud,—"End! Why, in soft nothings: how should it end otherwise?"

"You do not think, then, that Ellen likes her cousin?" inquired Lord Marston, turning towards Mr. Orde.

"She! nonsense! What is Edward?—a lawyer

—clever, no doubt, but poor and untitled; and she the prettiest girl in London. That *he* loves her is evident—and so do others;" (Lord Marston coloured;) "she only plays with his passion, be assured."

"Yet she encourages no one else," observed Lord Marston.

"That your lordship may be a better judge of than myself — I never made love to her. But believe me," and Orde raised his voice to an indisputable pitch, "Ellen does not intend to make a less good marriage than her sisters. When she flies along in Lady Conway's splendid equipage, with the roses in her bonnet dancing perpetually as she bends her pretty little head to everybody she meets, she is only rehearsing the part she will some day play in a similar carriage of her own. And only observe her little consequential manner in her mother's opera-box with Prince A—— by her side! My good Marston, if she does encourage Edward, it is mere child's play; and I lay my life he is not deceived: that it is all outward show, he is well aware."

At that moment the subjects of their discourse rode by. Edward's horse made a violent plunge:

it was only the affair of a moment; but in that moment a scream was heard from Ellen, and she turned pale as death. The next instant a deep blush had succeeded to the alarm she had betrayed, and which the occasion did not in the least justify. Edward was completely master of his horse, and would hardly have noticed the plunge he gave, but for the interest it excited in Ellen, which she attempted to laugh off, not daring to encounter the gratitude sparkling in return from Edward's eyes. All this was well observed by Lord Marston, and he turned with a dejected air towards his companion; but Orde had moved away: with a heavy sigh, therefore, he guided his horse in an opposite direction to that of the St. Clairs.

For above the space of six months Lord Marston had admired Ellen greatly; and his admiration only required some admiration from the lady herself in return to be warmed into fervent love. But well did Lord Marston know, though he dined twice a week at her father's, and met her every evening in society, that Ellen's behaviour to him was merely the well-bred ease of a good-natured girl, perfectly compatible with absolute indifference; and that his assiduities would have

long died away but for Lord and Lady St. Clair, to whom they were not so devoid of value as in their daughter's eyes. For the last month, Edward's absence on the circuits had cleared the field of a formidable rival; at least so thought Lord Marston,—and love is quick-sighted. Poor Edward was clever, and though untitled, of the same blood as herself: he was a favourite of her father, and moreover very handsome. Lord Marston sighed as these reflections passed his mind.

To be sure, *en revanche*, he himself was an earl, and his income fifteen thousand a year! But he was not handsome, and he was forty: and his forty years' experience told him that, at eighteen, wealth is considered of no moment, beauty of some importance, and, alas! title a matter of indifference.

The meditative mood in which Lord Marston pursued his ride was not lost upon a certain Mr. Conyers, who, putting his horse into a trot, soon joined his lordship. Mr. Conyers was extremely intimate with the St. Clairs, and suspected Lord Marston's attachment. He was not a man of iron feelings, and would therefore rather do a kindness than not; so, as an act of charity, he determined to give him a hint that his love was

hopeless, and with that benevolent intent reined up his horse by his side. To begin at once on the subject would have been to fail in good-breeding and tact, so by a circuitous route he gained the desired end. Hunting was his first theme; that led to shooting; shooting produced the preserves at St. Clair Abbey. The transition was easy then from the woods to the drawing-room, from the covey in the field to the family in the house.

"Ellen is a lovely child — perhaps not so handsome as Lady Conway, but very pretty; and Edward St. Clair is a very lucky dog to have such a wife in prospect."

"Orde has just been treating the idea with ridicule."

"Orde always affects greater wisdom than his neighbours," returned Mr. Conyers; "but it is quite a settled thing, I imagine — and I must say, I look upon it as a redeeming trait in old St. Clair's character, his consenting to this marriage. It will be a little set-off against a life of pride, avarice, and selfishness."

"He then encourages the marriage?" demanded Lord Marston.

" To be sure: did I not see all the manœuvres last Christmas? After all, St. Clair does as he has ever done, — he considers himself first. His two eldest daughters have aggrandized the family sufficiently, and in so doing have completely abandoned their homes. One, to be sure, as an ambassadress, could do no otherwise; and though they never meet, the rays of her glory still reach him at a distance, and her fame is heard of far and near. But Lady Conway, living in the same country, is opposed to him in politics and in society; is the queen of her own sphere, and too much occupied with her own concerns to think of her parents but at odd moments — such as on her journey to the North once in six years, or at dinner three times in the season, when she comes with the second course on an opera night, and vanishes with the ice! Fine ladies are all very well for holiday wear, but not fit for general use; a truth which I suppose St. Clair has by this time discovered, so he is concocting a different story at home. He will marry his pet to her love — they will live with him, and be always at hand to divert his *ennui*. Edward will look after the horses, dogs, and accounts; Ellen will

sing when she is wanted, talk sometimes, smile always, and please every one by her amiability and grace."

"Such mixed *ménages* seldom answer," observed Lord Marston.

"So I have heard; but Ellen is so very charming, and Edward so good a fellow: besides, it will be their interest to behave well, and, what is better, their taste. It will do famously: I must really think of a present. They want nothing for their establishment, as they will reside with Lord St. Clair: I must buy a ring or necklace—a *Sevignée* — that shall be the thing! it will suit my little Ellen delightfully."

"But surely," exclaimed Lord Marston, roused to answer, "the affair is not so near completion, I trust?"

"Why not? what should they wait for?"

"Ellen St. Clair is so young."

"That is Edward's look-out. But I will tell you one thing, — they leave town in a week, and Edward goes fourth in the family coach."

"Then, if Lord St. Clair does not intend him for a son-in-law, he is acting a most atrocious part by all concerned."

"Does not intend? my good lord! He is *making* the marriage himself: but for him, Edward and Ellen would have played at brother and sister all their lives. If they did not like each other, St. Clair would be the first to complain," said Mr. Conyers; and wishing Lord Marston a good morning, he put his horse into a canter, leaving his lordship to ruminate on what he had said.

Lord Marston did consider, and at the same time reverted in his mind to sundry speeches addressed to himself by Lord and Lady St. Clair, not very compatible with Mr. Conyers's opinion of their wishes to marry their daughter to her cousin; and indeed, with all his modesty,—and he was modest almost to humility,—those speeches strongly savoured of encouragement to him as a suitor for Ellen's hand.

"He is deceiving those poor children, I verily believe," thought Lord Marston. *He was quite right!*

Upon his return home from his morning's ride, he found a smooth-surfaced note, with an interior flowing as smoothly.

"If I should not have the good fortune to meet you, my dear Lord Marston, before we

leave town on Thursday, pray believe how delighted Lord St. Clair and myself should be to have the pleasure of seeing you at St. Clair Abbey whenever you may find it convenient to pay us a visit; and, need I add, the earlier the day the more agreeable. As an inducement, I must mention that we expect the Archers and the Mornams in the beginning of September: but, before that, if you will visit us, *en famille*, we shall have great delight in introducing you to our summer beauties, &c. &c. CAROLINE ST. CLAIR."

This billet had a decided effect upon Lord Marston's movements, bringing to a decision a question which had some time agitated his mind—a visit to his sister, who lived some thirty miles from London, which might be taken either on the road to the abbey, or on his return from thence, and that the sooner he departed the better, so as to steal a march upon the Archers and Mornams, the lure held out to attract him, in the shape of what is termed fine people;—and Lord Marston could not bear fine people, when that character is obliged to support itself unconnected with talent, generosity, or liveliness. Though the wings of love were supposed to aid his flight into the

country, yet it ever cost him a pang to quit the shady side of the London streets. He was not dissipated; but he had the misfortune to be insensible to the beauties of nature in country scenes, and indifferent to country sports. His taste, which there is no disputing, led him to prefer the society of a humdrum October party in the smoky atmosphere of May Fair, to the *élite* of the *beau monde* then congregating in their respective counties: and if the actual presence of the landlord be not absolutely necessary—of which there may be doubts, provided the poor are attended to, and the rents not squandered in a foreign land, — Lord Marston was not wrong in following the bent of his humour; and but for his alarm at the threat of the Mornams and Archers, he would probably have hesitated a little longer ere he put to the proof how far he might hope to gain Ellen's affections, or how far they were undermined by the constant presence of "cousin Edward." In motion, however, his lordship was put; and the sudden stoppage of four galloping posters awoke him from a slumber that had lasted from the foot of Highgate Hill to the door of St. Clair Abbey. Lord Marston shook himself, rubbed his eyes,

and springing from the carriage, found himself welcomed by Lord St. Clair.

St. Clair Abbey was, as to exterior, the same as Crawford had found it fourteen years before. Its society was, however, on a much reduced scale; Mrs. Willis and Miss St. Clair being the only visitors. Like the abbey, the appearance of these two ladies was unchanged. Time had laid a very lenient hand on Mrs. Willis: her hair was as brown, her figure as round, and her skin as dead as at twenty years of age. With Miss St. Clair, the feelings had at one blow accomplished the worst that could be done to beauty through their destructive agency, and she was early cast, a useless wreck, beyond the reach of future storms to assail her more: with her, the work of years had been the affair of a moment!

Lady St. Clair was most cordial in her reception of her hoped-for son-in-law; Mrs. Willis expressed her pleasure at seeing him; and Miss St. Clair, darting a penetrating glance from beneath her dark eyes, followed the direction of his as they rested on Ellen, who, fresh with the bloom of exercise, entered with Edward from a walk.

At dinner, Lord Marston of course sat next to Lady St. Clair; but Ellen was on his other side. The party was too small for particular discourse; they had no communication, therefore, but the drinking wine together.

The conversational part of the entertainment was furnished by Edward and Ellen, who rattled on, like two indulged children, upon the walk of the morning, which of course, like all young people's, had been extremely prolific in adventures. As no one else spoke, they were at full liberty to talk on till the dessert was placed upon the table, and the servants gone; when Lord St. Clair took the principal share of speech into his own hands, having relinquished that of eating, and began a series of oft-told tales, which happily required the semblance only of attention in his constant auditors. Lord Marston, indeed, could not boast of being equally well-informed; but he trusted to others giving the mechanical nods, sighs, and smiles as required, and resigned himself to the contemplation of the prettiest little shaped head in the world, so well placed on her shoulders, and ornamented by such luxuriant dark hair. Ellen's eyes were downcast, though without apparent in-

attention to her father's words, and round her mouth lurked a soft smile, which the pleased Lord St. Clair gave credit to, as the offspring of his wit; —the rather more sagacious Lord Marston had other suspicions. Miss St. Clair was occupied in watching the stranger's eyes, and divining the nature of his thoughts: that she divined justly was perhaps no great proof of her penetration, for his lordship was inartificial to a fault, and the safety which he gained by the fewness of his words was rendered nugatory by the simple sincerity of his countenance. Edward found employment in a dish of walnuts, and whenever he did raise his eyes, they were sure to catch a corresponding look from Ellen: Lord Marston marvelled much at his good fortune, and by never turning his from the fair object of his adoration, hoped by accident to obtain a similar reward; but he looked and hoped in vain.

After dinner a whist-table was formed in the drawing-room. Lord and Lady St. Clair, Mrs. Willis, and Lord Marston formed the party. Ellen was summoned by her father to sit by him for luck; and Edward was preparing, unsummoned, to follow her steps, when he was arrested by the

sound of Miss St. Clair's voice, demanding, in rather a peremptory tone,

"Who may this Lord Marston be?"

"Who!"

"Oh, I do not wish to know his pedigree and rent-roll; they are both long enough, I make no question: but what brings him here?"

"His own pleasure, I suppose, in consequence of my uncle's and aunt's invitation."

"His own feelings, rather say, in consequence of his admiration of their daughter."

"I am not in his confidence," answered Edward with gravity; "your surmises or information may be correct."

"Information, child! what should I know about Lord Marston? I never saw him, or even heard of him, before to-day; but I see plainly that he loves Ellen, and I read that in his countenance which I like: he has sincerity and worth imprinted on his brow. I would rather be the Countess of Marston than the patroness or the ambassadress: therefore he has my good wishes to win the poor child's heart, and to transport her from her native soil as soon as ever he likes."

Whilst Miss St. Clair spoke, the countenance of Edward assumed each moment a darker hue; and when she ceased, he asked in a sharp tone, "if, in marrying, Ellen would be obliged to ask the consent of all her relations?"

"She will have only to ask one person's consent," answered Miss St. Clair.

"Her own!" eagerly exclaimed Edward.

"Her own! poor child," said Miss St. Clair, smiling contemptuously, "she is the last person who will be listened to, when disposed of."

"My dear aunt, you must allow me to differ with you as to such an opinion: you forget what a favourite Ellen has been from her cradle,—you forget the indulgent nature of my uncle and aunt."

"I forget nothing," said Miss St. Clair with warmth: "I know what St. Clair's indulgent nature is;—I remember that of my father,—and he is his exact counterpart. It is with the greatest pleasure I hail Lord Marston as an unobjectionable son-in-law. I trust he is arrived in time to save poor Ellen from treading in her aunt's steps, and bestowing her affections unsanctioned by a parent's consent."

Edward smiled. His aunt regarded him earnestly, and, laying her meagre hand upon his arm, she said in a solemn tone, her eyes darting a glance as if to read the inmost secrets of his heart—"You smile, Edward. Is it that you know my wishes and hopes are vain? If so, instead of smiles let me hear groans, and mourning instead of triumph; for assuredly such as I am, Ellen will be."

"My dear aunt, do not, I implore, forbode evil, nor give my smile a meaning it was not meant to convey."

"I grant you, *not meant* to convey, or rather betray; but ——"

"My smile, I assure you, was nothing more than one of incredulity as to Lord Marston's success, because ——"

"Because of Ellen's heart being gone," interrupted Miss St. Clair, her pallid face assuming a more ghastly hue.

"Not at all; because simply Lord Marston, though a very good sort of fellow, does not succeed with women; and, as Ellen is neither sordid nor ambitious, I look upon the earl's chance of being accepted, should he propose, as altogether hopeless."

"Do you think any one else likely to have better success?"

"No;" but Edward blushed as the faint monosyllable escaped his lips.

"You are not sincere, Edward?"

Edward gave an impatient gesture as if wearied by the discourse, and made a movement to rise.

"You are offended," continued his aunt. "Well, I forgive you; you are in love."

"I!" ejaculated Edward.

"Yes; answer me not: you think you are loved in return; you even dream of marriage; but, believe me, you are deceived—Lord St. Clair never will consent."

"You imagine a case, aunt, and then argue upon it. I have made no acknowledgment of being in love, or of having the slightest idea of marriage."

"I wish that was any proof; but I trust I am mistaken, and that I am not too late in giving you warning. Beware of allowing your cousinly affection for Ellen to ripen into a warmer sentiment."

"Oh, my dear aunt," answered Edward playfully, "your warning is indeed too late: I fell

in love with Ellen when she attained the age of four years, and gained her affections in return by the present of a certain lilac and green sash; our love is therefore quite antiquated, has borne the test of time, and is more likely to fail from age than any other death."

"I am glad you can be witty upon your feelings,—it is more than I could have been under similar circumstances."

"Then we will trust that our cases are not so analogous as you suspect; and in one respect, granting your suspicions to be correct, allow me to observe a marked dissimilarity—excuse me, and believe I wish not to hurt your feelings—but you can understand that, though poor, I am well born—Ellen and I are of equal rank and family, whilst——"

"I know what you would say," interrupted Miss St. Clair,—"whilst Charles Egerton was only a tutor."

"That is not all, I am a favourite of her father's."

"So was Egerton of mine."

"But from my boyhood I have been so."

"The more unfortunate for you, I fear. In

one respect, however, I must set you right, and exculpate myself from any apparent vanity in drawing a parallel between my lover and yourself, supposing my suspicions to be correct. To say that Egerton was a favourite would be using far too cold a term: he was positively everything in the house; no pleasure could be enjoyed, no care supported, without him. We were brought up to consider him in the light of a devoted friend. You will say all this might well exist, and yet a line of demarcation be so strictly observed, that the difference of birth could never be forgotten. My father was the first who threw that barrier down; and at the very moment when the discovery of our love took place by the person who, in defiance of all that was just and honourable, took the opportunity of Egerton's absence to break open his writing case, quite as many letters from my father were found, urging him to relinquish the church, for which he was intended, — offering to bring him into parliament, and to push his fortunes with the minister, who was a near relation of my mother's. All these offers were made to the man whose ruin he afterwards tried every possible means to compass, for presuming to fall

in love with a girl thrown quite as much in his way as Ellen has been in yours—more so could not be well possible. Remember what I say, Edward; let my words not fade in an instant: everything else in this house you may command, but one thing you cannot compass—marriage with Ellen."

Miss St. Clair paused, and having as she spoke arranged her work in her box, arose, and, without waiting her nephew's reply, quitted the apartment. The feelings which his aunt's discourse had awakened in his mind would be difficult to describe; Edward, however, gave little credit to her warnings, though they certainly had produced sadness, and not precisely understanding why he sought the relief of air, stole from the drawing-room, and soon found himself in the lofty portico which extended on the garden front of the house. A soft moonlight gave life to the landscape, and the air was filled with a thousand perfumes extracted from a parterre below, crowded by every gay and fragrant plant the season afforded. For one moment, feelings of self gave way before the tranquil scene: but the next, Edward was insensible to all but

the charms of solitude, when occupied with the thoughts of her he loved.

"So my aunt thinks I love! Well, she is not very far mistaken; but as to her other surmises, I by no means subscribe to them. I to be slighted, neglected, and refused! I, who bear the same name, who have lived under the same roof, and who own the same ties as Ellen; and, whatever vanity there may be in the acknowledgment, do no dishonour to the name I possess —and I to be scouted, rejected, and warned off the domains! Impossible! My uncle loves me, so does his wife; and, far, far more precious, my gentle Ellen in this very spot, one short week back, before that very moon acknowledged her affection. What dreams of bliss have since filled my mind! till, like a bird of ill omen, arose Miss St. Clair's raven voice, threatening me with a repetition of her own melancholy tale. Why did I listen to her? Why do I now think of her? She always foresees evils. But she judges wrongly, as one day she will confess, for Ellen shall, must, and will be mine; and my aunt's prophecy be scattered before the winds."

"The winds and the waves can restore that

which is abandoned to their mercy—and the sibyl's prophecy may recoil on him who despises it."

"My aunt's voice! but I will hear no more," exclaimed Edward, rushing by Miss St. Clair, who had stolen unperceived on his soliloquy. She did not attempt to stop him as he flew towards the drawing-room for half an hour of Ellen's conversation before he retired to rest.

As the conversation of lovers is never of value but to the individuals themselves, it shall be omitted. All that is necessary to be told is, that when Edward sank to sleep, Miss St. Clair's discourse was entirely forgotten, and nothing remembered but the silver tone of Ellen's voice, which even in his slumbers seemed to linger in his ear.

Lord Marston remained one week at St. Clair Abbey—long enough to convince himself that his love for Ellen was hopeless, and, from the favour with which they regarded Edward, the encouragement even of her parents might after all be doubtful. The vanity of Lord Marston was not hurt, for he was singularly free from that odious though very common failing: his feelings, however, on the subject were more than was quite compatible with

the calm philosophy in which he wished to enshrine himself.

Lady St. Clair was somewhat surprised at Lord Marston's sudden departure without proposing for Ellen. She settled the matter to her own satisfaction with this reflection:

"I dare say he will return with the shooting or hunting season, for men are always restless without the sports of the field to employ them. The affair will perhaps be more conveniently settled then than now, and it will not carry us to London much sooner than usual. Now, they must have been married here—and a country wedding is the most boring thing on earth—unless we had gone to town when not a soul would be there.—And what can possess Wright to put out my lilac satin dress, with not a creature in the shape of company? any old gown will do."

A few days after this soliloquy, a fresh set of ideas had been created in Lady St. Clair's mind, which were better expressed, not in the form they were vented by her tongue, but by her pen, in a letter to her daughter the ambassadress. The reader shall be spared the beginning of the precious epistle: it related to an attack of the gout in her

husband's foot, and the demolition of a lately-erected hothouse, caused by a hail-storm. It continued thus:

"These distresses have been quite enough annoyance to me without any additional trouble. I am sure, therefore, you will pity me when you hear that Edward, *pour comble de malheur*, has chosen to fall in love, as he calls it, with Ellen, and has had the folly to propose marriage! Of course Lord St. Clair and myself have treated the idea in the manner it deserves, and would not listen to what the young man had to say in favour of his suit; the most important matter being too clear, that neither the one nor the other possess anything, which the arguments of the young lawyer, with all his sophistry, could never prove to be otherwise than the case. The folly of the proposal on Edward's part was great, but Ellen has the still greater absurdity to affect an inclination for her cousin also. I suppose she has been reading novels till her brain is turned by their romantic nonsense; and having conjured up Edward as a hero of romance, she must needs play the heroine. I have given her my mind pretty freely, begging to hear no more of such stuff. She

was confined to her chamber for three days, and her books taken from her as a punishment, and was only allowed to descend when Edward departed to visit his friend Hartley at the Grove, where he now is.

His departure, however, is a great annoyance: we expect company next week, and without him I know not how Lord St. Clair will be able to manage about the shooting; and then we expect the Lady Nightingales, and they are always so troublesome about their singing if they have no man to accompany them; and we shall have no one of the family to sit at the bottom of the table; and there are a thousand directions to be given, which, without Edward, I fear cannot be explained; so I think that I shall write to him to return home. He and Ellen must take their chance; but I shall give positive orders that they are to have no communication with each other. Edward will have enough to do in looking after the male guests, and I shall insist upon Ellen's devoting herself to the females.

"Miss St. Clair has been more than ever disagreeable about this business. She presumed to give advice; and, would you believe it? to blame,

not the guilty Edward and Ellen, but the innocent Lord St. Clair and myself! I will not weary you by repeating her impertinent speeches. She wants Ellen to go with her into Scotland:—what an idea! when our house is going to be full of company for the next six weeks; after which we are engaged to Dartmore House for the races, and Ellen has in preparation the prettiest morning and evening costume that ever appeared. She will then assuredly dance with the Duke of Ashford, and forget, if she has not already done so, her childish whim.

"Adieu, my dear child!

"Caroline St. Clair."

CHAPTER IV.

The commencement of this tale introduced to the reader a person named William Crawford. From the long silence with regard to him it might be imagined that he had met a soldier's fate, and followed his friend St. Clair to an untimely grave. His good genius, however, had ordained otherwise, and at the period we have reached in this history, he had survived hard blows and wounds to succeed to his paternal property—to marry a lovely and amiable woman, the sister of Lord Marston,—to become the father of three children, — to receive a red riband from the hands of his sovereign, and to write K. C. B. at the end of his name. He lived chiefly on his estate in Hertfordshire ;—farmed a little, shot a little, visited his neighbours, spoiled his wife, played with his children, indulged his servants, and, in short, led an easy happy life, with every

one happy around him—most particularly the maimed hero Reynolds, who, in the capacity of gate-keeper, lived at the entrance-lodge, and was himself at the head of an establishment consisting of a wife, more robust than handsome, and half a dozen children, whose countenances spoke health and good humour, if not beauty.

The evening of the day Lord Marston quitted St. Clair Abbey, Reynolds was summoned to his post by the impatient cries of two well-paid postboys. Hardly was their call obeyed and the gates thrown open—hardly had Reynolds time to lift his hand to his head, *en militaire*, to his master's guest, before the chaise and four to which he gave entrance had flown past him, and was lost to view in a cloud of dust raised by the horses' feet. The cloud flew forward to the door of the house, where gradually dispersing, a smart green travelling chaise appeared, from which smart chaise in due time stepped forth the Earl of Marston. Lady Jane and Sir William Crawford were instantly at the door to give him welcome with their customary warmth as a tenderly beloved brother: the children followed; but the whole family soon discovered that Lord Marston was not in his cus-

tomary, even flow of spirits. It was in vain that they displayed various improvements which had taken place since his last visit—it was in vain Sir William paraded before him a newly purchased steed, as faultless as all such acquisitions, when lately made, ever are in the eyes of the purchaser —it was in vain his wife related an amusing anecdote of the neighbourhood—Lord Marston could not be aroused even to the appearance of interest;—he was absent and almost melancholy, and his sister at length consigned him to his own apartment, hoping that a few hours, or at most a few days, would remove his dejection, or give her the opportunity of consolation by having the cause imparted to her. She had some suspicions as to the real state of the case, which suspicions were confirmed, not however till ten days or more had elapsed, when, as she was at breakfast with her brother and husband, the latter read from the paper the following simple paragraph amongst the marriages :—

"Edward St. Clair, Esq. to the Hon. Ellen St. Clair."

Lord Marston's florid complexion became of a deadly pale: he replaced the coffee he was

carrying to his lips on the table, exclaiming, "Good God! they are then actually married!"

"Did you know it was likely?" inquired Lady Jane.

"I had my suspicions," answered Lord Marston in a low voice.

"Well," said Crawford, "I am sure I had none; and, considering all things, Mr. Edward might just as well have anticipated the public prints, by a letter announcing the event as likely to take place."

"It is very strange," continued Lord Marston as if to himself;—"it must have been all settled when I was at the Abbey. Well, I might have supposed as much."

"It is a very good marriage for Edward," said Lady Jane.

"Excellent! and I give old St. Clair credit for having so handsomely redeemed his promise of providing for his brother's child—for of course he has settled handsomely on his daughter."

"I should like to know some particulars," said Lady Jane: "Edward should have written."

"He is too much engaged with his love to think of any one else," replied Lord Marston.

"They are very much in love, and I dare say—I hope—they will be very happy." Lord Marston heaved a deep sigh, and, leaving his unfinished breakfast, hastily quitted the room.

Sir William and his wife exchanged glances. "Poor Marston!" said the first; "he has been hit at last. But, as Ellen is fairly married and out of the question, we must cure him by finding a new love. There is no scarcity of single ladies, happily, of all complexions and dispositions, the greater part of whom will not hold a coronet so cheap as Edward's bride."

"But Marston must be loved and married for himself, not for his wealth and title."

"I hope so too, Jane; but if those glittering appendages were to prove the attraction, I trust the more valuable advantages of sense and temper would secure the prize."

"Which prize must be pretty, agreeable, sensible, and amiable, or she will not be worthy of Marston," answered the sister.

The marriage of Edward St. Clair and his cousin was graced by no splendid accompaniments,

nor even friendly ones. It was in Scotland,—it was in that land of refuge for two devoted, unthinking beings, such as Edward and Ellen, that their hands were joined; and in the ecstasy of that moment, no thoughts intruded themselves to throw a shade over their felicity; they cared not that the step which had joined them, never to part, had closed the hearts of all they depended upon for ever against them—had made them exiles, houseless, and friendless: for the poor have rarely a friend, and the effects of toadyism are seldom more strikingly displayed than when, at the great man's law, all the humble satellites in his orbit shut their eyes and ears, if they cannot their understandings, to ensure their making no display of any feeling but subservience to the superior planet's power.

The marriage took place. Missives of penitence and hopes of forgiveness were despatched to Lord and Lady St. Clair, and to every one who it was supposed had power to soften their hearts; and, with very little doubts as to finding satisfactory answers to their various letters upon their return to the town of S——, the new married pair started on a tour in the Highlands. Three

weeks did they pass in uninterrupted happiness: arm-in-arm did Ellen and Edward wander over hill and dale, and side by side did they sketch every beauty which nature unfolded to their view. The rude fare they met with was excellent after the mountain excursions of the morning, and they sank to rest beneath the humblest roof, with that delicious repose which a peaceful conscience, happy mind, and healthful body ever give.

Once more the town of S—— broke on their view.

Mr. St. Clair's valet and his wife's maid stood at the inn door, having formed no part in the tour.

"There are a vast number of letters for you, madam," said the maid, as Ellen descended from the carriage.

"I knew it would be so!" exclaimed Ellen, springing forward into the house; "I told you, Edward, that my parents would be kind to their poor Ellen."

"It would be very extraordinary if they were otherwise. Who could be unkind to so dear a little angel as yourself?" answered her husband, as he pressed to his side the little hand which

rested on his arm. They were soon in the small inn parlour: a cheerful fire blazed in the grate, and preparations for dinner were on the table; but the chief object of attraction to both was the formidable array of letters which stood on the chimney-piece.

"There are three from my father," cried Ellen, as she hastily tore open the envelopes, whilst Edward more leisurely began to scan those addressed to himself. He had advanced but a little way, however, when the convulsive sobs of poor Ellen met his ear: he rushed towards her, and folding her in his arms, implored to know the cause of her sorrow. Disappointment—bitter disappointment was the occasion! The three important packets, franked by her father and sealed by her mother, contained her milliner's bill; a ball-room friend's letter full of girlish gossip; some lithographic announcements of the change of abode of various tradespeople, and requests of future favours; a letter from an old governess; and none—no, not one single line from Lord or Lady St. Clair,—nothing to denote they existed, or thought of their once loved child, except the care with which matters of no importance whatsoever had been

conveyed to her! One letter, however, of the many she had written was acknowledged. Ellen's answer from the Countess of Conway was as follows:—

"My dear Ellen,

"I return you many thanks for your letter, and beg to offer my congratulations on the happy event announced. I trust that all your felicitous prospects will be realized, and that years of married bliss are opening to you and Edward, to whom present my love, as well as that of Lord Conway, who begs to offer the same mark of his affection to you.

"If you had made a more brilliant marriage, I would have requested your acceptance of some ornament for your person; but as I imagine a useful rather than a showy present would be more acceptable, I have ordered Harding to forward, to wherever you may direct, a pink gros de Naples dress, which I hope you will accept for the sake of your affectionate sister,

"Pamela Conway."

Edward knew not which most to condemn, the

silence of the parents or the heartless epistle of the sister. The latter, however, he had the satisfaction of crushing in his hand with disdain, as some retribution for the offence; but with regard to Lord and Lady St. Clair's behaviour he had no consolation but unfeigned commiseration with his little wife, who, broken-hearted, shed torrents of tears on his bosom. The sorrow of Ellen was violent almost to exhaustion. She did not anticipate any of those evils, which now first found place in her husband's mind, of all the difficulties poverty entails in its hideous suite: it was not loss of wealth, but loss of friends, that Ellen mourned over. She had never known unkindness—she would not willingly herself have turned away from the prayer of the meanest individual, or have given pain to any one living thing: in her small sphere her hand and heart were open to all, and no tear was ever shed which she could possibly avert. That the whole world thought like herself, that all were equally humane, disinterested and generous, never admitted a doubt in Ellen's mind. The pleasure of doing good and being kind was so great to herself, that she imagined it would be exercised for itself alone, independently of the gra-

tification afforded to others; and having trusted to the maxim, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," she had lived to her eighteenth year in happy ignorance of care or evil; the first lesson, alas! she was fated to receive arising from a quarter she would have deemed perfectly secure—her parents!

"Could you have believed it possible?" exclaimed the weeping Ellen;—"not one line to acknowledge the letters! I am so very, very miserable, Edward."

"My angel, my love, be consoled!—I am with you — I will be everything to you, do everything a man can do to make you happy: let us hope for the best — the answers to your letters may be favourable yet. My sweet darling Ellen, do not cry so!"

The words of Edward for some time fell unheeded; at length he persuaded Ellen to retire to bed, and giving her a composing draught, a tranquil slumber succeeded her violent sorrow.

Whilst the cares of his wife were locked in sleep, Edward felt little able to seek the same remedy, and sat in melancholy contemplation of the declining fire, and his own equally fallen

fortunes. Ellen had wept from disappointed affection; she had sorrowed over the neglect of those from whom she had expected indulgence, and over the first instance of unkindness that had ever met her youthful mind. She would wake, however, to form excuses for the conduct of those she loved, to hope for better things, and to be again deceived.

Not so Edward: his better knowledge of the hearts of men had never led him to encourage the expectations, which Ellen had entertained, of a speedy reconciliation with her parents; but that their ire would have carried them the length of allowing their offspring to suffer from pecuniary want, had never entered his mind. Lord St. Clair, as his guardian, knew that his fortune produced about three hundred a year: from himself, however, Lady St. Clair, and Mrs. Willis, he had generally received presents in the course of the year to more than double his income; and as to Ellen, whatever she desired, she had but to ask for, and her purse was instantly replenished, be it for charity, dress, or merely for wanton expenditure. That these means should entirely cease—that their sole dependance in future should be on Edward's

three hundred a year, which income, Edward trembled to think, various unpaid debts he had thoughtlessly contracted would for the present swallow up — that the indulged Ellen should be without the means of existence but in the most lowly form, now struck him for the first time, and was an idea so cruel, that whilst he inwardly imprecated the hard father, he was equally inclined to invoke punishment on his own head for having beguiled from her luxurious home, a youthful plant like Ellen, so unfitted for, and ignorant of, "the ills that flesh is heir to" — and who, in the simplicity of her heart, only wept at the unkindness of her parents in not writing to her, perfectly unconscious that such silence ominously portended loss of bread as well as loss of friends.

It would have been difficult to explain all this to Ellen, and Edward had no intention of adding to her sorrows; still he was almost in despair as to finding means for their present subsistence. Covering his face with his hands, he sat deeply ruminating upon the steps he must take to exist. The very milliner's bill, which, with admirable mockery, had been sent to Ellen, amounted to

fifty pounds — and poor Edward too well knew that the letters he had received were of that melancholy species termed 'duns'! Thinking, however, was of little use. His brother, who, he was assured, would befriend him if he had a shilling left in the world, was at Malta with his regiment, and to no other person could he apply. It might be years before he could obtain any advantage by his profession of the law; and in the mean time Ellen would be immured in a small lodging and subject to every possible inconvenience, often uncheered by his society, perhaps sick from confined air and want of exercise.

Edward groaned as the prospect of his future life opened to his view; and in agony of spirit at what his beloved Ellen might have to undergo, he buried his face in his hands and wept aloud. Engrossed in his sorrows, he heeded not the arrival of a carriage, the loud ringing of a bell, the opening and shutting of doors, nor the actual entrance of a female into the room in which he sat — it was only the familiar touch of some one upon his arm which made him

start round, and he beheld standing before him his aunt, Miss St. Clair!

"Why, what is all this?—groans and tears!—when I thought to have found you in all a bridegroom's smiles and glee,—all frolic and fun, and no thought or care. Where is your wife? Is she ill?"

"Rather indisposed; she was fatigued with her journey, and is retired to rest. My dear aunt, I am delighted to see you—I did not know your abode was in this neighbourhood."

"I dare say you did not—very few of *my family* do know where I live," answered Miss St. Clair, with her accustomed scornful air; "but that is no matter—it is much more to the purpose to talk about yourself than myself. What ails you, Edward?—are you sick or sad?"

"Neither, my dear aunt—perfectly well and perfectly happy," said Edward, affecting a cheerful air.

"I could swear the tears were in your eyes when they first met mine,"—and Miss St. Clair regarded her nephew earnestly,—"even now I could fancy a slight moisture hung on their lids."

" The heaviness of sleep was alone upon them ; for, setting aside the unmanliness of tears, which should only be the solace of your sex's sorrows, how is it possible that the husband of dear lovely Ellen should be otherwise than the happiest of the happy ? I can have no care, and no reason but for smiles."

" The possession of the woman you love is indeed a reason for smiles — and I can readily believe that such a cause would make a dungeon a paradise, render wealth superfluous, friends obtrusive or unnecessary, and a parent's ire unheeded — this I can believe, and expected to find, and, according to your account, have found. I will not credit my own ears, but your assertions — though I thought I heard sighs and groans on entering this apartment ; but I make no doubt I was mistaken."

Edward did not think it necessary to repeat his former assertion, and having drawn a chair for his aunt to the fire, he waited to hear what further she might have to say to him.

" Well," she said at length," I want to know if you and Ellen would like to pay me a visit be-

fore you leave the country? — Pray what may your plans be?"

"We have formed none," answered Edward hesitatingly. "We shall be very happy to pay you a visit — I am sure that I can answer for Ellen as well as myself."

"Very well,—then you had better come to-morrow, and stay as long as you like. I should not have presumed to offer my humble roof as a covering to the heads of Lord St. Clair's *favoured* children, had I not found you in this lowly dwelling — a house of public entertainment; which entertainment, I make no doubt, is as dear as it is bad. I have little to offer you in my abode, save a tidy bed-room, a tidy dinner, the company of a cross old woman and her Scotch terrier; to which I may add, what we are supposed to reckon in the North a great enhancement to all pleasure, and an equal antidote to pain — the having no bill to pay on your departure, however long you choose to indulge me with your company."

Edward coloured, and though conscious that his purse was not over full, and that his aunt had no intention in reality of insulting his poverty,

yet he could not resist replying, that his affairs were not yet in so desperate a state as to oblige him to have recourse to the charity of his relations.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Miss St. Clair vehemently, — "God in his mercy forbid! The very idea of depending upon the hearts of the St. Clairs — of depending upon the charity of our family for bread, is enough to freeze the few drops of blood that age has left in my veins. I will give you one piece of advice, Edward—If you are starving, never own it to *them;* if *they* thought you could not live without their aid, they would leave you at once to die. As far as they are concerned, you must pretend to have discovered the philosopher's stone. Dazzle their eyes and ears by exaggerated statements of your wealth, and they will offer you their hearts, homes, and possibly their purses!"

"Hypocrisy is no part of my character — it is what I can never practise — and, moreover, it would be perfectly useless as far as my income is concerned: my fortune is too well known to every one of my relations, and most particularly to my uncle, who had the management of it till I became of age," replied Edward earnestly.

"Then God help you!" said his aunt with a sigh almost amounting to a groan.

"I trust He will; but I need not despair of the aid of man, I hope, in the person of Lord St. Clair."

"Of St. Clair?" said Miss St. Clair earnestly: "has he really done anything for you?—is he likely to forgive and assist you?"

Edward shook his head — "He has returned no answer to our letters."

"And *never* will, take my word for it. Do not *I* know him? Do I not know them all?—The day after you left St. Clair Abbey, Ernest and his sister, by way of condolence, came on a visit. They were soon established in yours and Ellen's place: Anne accompanied her aunt to the races, and danced with the Duke of Ashford; and as to Ernest, he has actually commenced his canvass of the county, and, it is reported, is to marry Miss Taylor, the heiress intended for you."

"I wish him joy of his senatorial and matrimonial honours," replied Edward; "and Lady St. Clair of her good taste in putting up with that little squinting fright, Anne St. Clair, instead of

her own lovely daughter. As to the Duke of Ashford, it was his misfortune to be obliged to dance with my sweet Ellen's miserable representative."

Miss St. Clair rose. "Well, you will come to-morrow?—Thank goodness, lovers do not require to be amused, so you will not mind my being dull; and I am reckoned so much so in this neighbourhood, that no one will be wearied by my society, except an old puritanical minister or two, with whom I can be as disagreeable as I like, without their finding it out, or caring about it if they did. With one of these gentlemen I am now returning from dinner. Adieu, child!—kiss your wife for me—do not despond, and take the word of a soured old maid, that you are more an object of envy than pity."

Miss St. Clair departed, and shortly after Edward retired to rest, with his heart lightened of some care by the present offer of a home for his Ellen.

CHAPTER V.

Miss St. Clair's abode was far from splendid: a person, however, of less fortune but more taste might have given it a better air without any great exertion of mind or diminution of purse.

She seemed studiously to have avoided any collision with that rock so many have split upon, and, by flying from *elegance*, to have sunk into the extreme of negligence,—rendering a dreary spot ten times more dreary; and, by the contempt with which she treated such common repairs as painting rails, weeding of walks, new hanging of gates, and mending of roads, had given so dilapidated an appearance to the whole place, that, but for various columns of thick smoke rising from the chimneys, and a well-fed house-dog at the door, Edward and Ellen would have certainly retraced their steps, deeming it impossible for that before them to be the habitation to which they had been

directed on leaving S——, as Miss St. Clair's, or, indeed, the habitation of any one.

The dog's roar—for it was a note beyond a bark—and his efforts to burst his chain at the sight of the strangers, made poor Ellen tremble; but the first had the desired effect of answering the purpose of a bell—there being none—and brought to the door a respectable old man-servant, followed by a ploughboy-looking youth, in an ill-made livery of the St. Clair hue.

The interior of the house was far superior to the exterior. A low, matted passage led to a small vestibule filled with flowers, which opened into a comfortable sitting-room, where, though there were no toys or china to dazzle the eye, there were of couches, chairs, and tables, a goodly store; and on the walls were neatly arranged poor Egerton's little property, bequeathed to Miss St. Clair at his death,—his college library, which, though the contents were in general little suited to a lady's drawing-room, it need not be added, were regarded by their present possessor with a veneration quite independent of the author who wrote them, or the amusement or instruction they afforded.

Miss St. Clair could be repulsive, but she could be cordial, and there was nothing to complain of in the reception she gave her nephew and niece. Still she was not for their sake going to adopt a new character,—to lay aside that which from habit or nature was now identified in her being. After a cordial embrace, and a few words of congratulation, which brought tears of gratitude into Ellen's lovely eyes, she could not resist the observation—

"Well, child, this is but a lowly dwelling for you to live in after St. Clair Abbey; and plain as this room is, you see the state apartment of the castle; and you must be content to forego all M. Aubert's dainties, with which your appetite has been pampered ever since your birth. And as to Edward, I never drink wine myself, and no one hardly ever crossing my threshold, I have a very impoverished cellar: God knows if I can muster a bottle of sour port for you to quench your thirst with. The old minister, when he comes, I treat with whisky: it is very good, he says, and I value it as being a *present*. But do not imagine any relation gave it me, or that any St. Clair ever vouchsafes to bestow any gratification

upon such an obscure individual as myself. No; it was a *souvenir* from a poor boy, to whom I was once enabled to show some trifling service;—trifling as it was, it influenced his future destiny, and when prosperous times arrived he increased his prosperity by a *good* marriage." The emphasis Miss St. Clair laid on the word *good* drew a blush to Ellen's cheeks, but highly diverted her less susceptible husband. Miss St. Clair continued, without noticing the smiles of the one or the emotion of the other:—"This marriage gave him occasion to write to me, and with the letter arrived a cask of whisky. I hope, Edward, therefore, you will not despise the bridegroom's gift or a misanthrope's fare."

Of course the guests professed their utter indifference to the luxuries of the table, and their preference to simple diet. Ellen truly expressed her feelings; and if Edward did not, he had the satisfaction of finding in the dining-room that his aunt had very much underrated the merits of her *cuisine*. A plain but excellent dinner appeared before them, rather profuse than otherwise, and some very tolerable claret, in addition to the whisky, which Miss St. Clair protested she had

forgot the existence of, till reminded by her old *maître d'hôtel*.

After dinner, a short walk, tea, and a little conversation soon brought the evening to a close. On parting with her guests at their chamber door, Miss St. Clair earnestly begged them to consider her house as their home for as long as it might be convenient or agreeable ; and that, should they not receive any summons from Lord St. Clair before, it would give her the greatest satisfaction if they would remain till the necessity of prosecuting his legal studies should oblige Edward to go to London.

This proposal could not be otherwise than acceptable to Edward and Ellen. The last expressed her thanks, and readiness to remain where she was till she heard from her father ; the more discriminating Edward named their departure for London as the period when their visit was likely to end.

Happily the sunshine of the honey-moon is not easily obscured. A light cloud had shaded for a moment the felicity of the newly-married pair ; but the delightful privilege of hoping soon revived Ellen's spirits ; and living beneath his aunt's roof,

all Edward's cares were at rest for the present. It must be confessed, however, that there was nothing enlivening either in Miss St. Clair's society or house; on the contrary, both were calculated to inspire gloom: her guests, however, were lovers, and had not yet attained the fifth week of their marriage. All Miss St. Clair's caustic remarks fell unheeded—or if attended to, it was only to pity the cause from whence they proceeded—disappointment in that passion which, with regard to themselves, rendered them, in their own estimation, the most blessed of human beings.

Miss St. Clair's character was a singular one. She said truly that her family were a cold, heartless, and selfish race; but she herself did not form an entire exception to the general rule. She was not cold or heartless, but she was selfish: her sorrows, and her hatred of the world, of society, and of her own family, were all to be traced to self. It was *her* wrongs which had put her out of humour with the world—and which wrongs she lost no opportunity of revenging by the bitterness of her tongue.

Till she was fifteen, Miss St. Clair had given

no promise of being the least wiser, better, or more tender-hearted, than her forefathers: she had come to no disgrace in the school-room, and afterwards in the drawing-room had kept the even tenour of her way, giving promise of being a regular St. Clair, and a very common-place character. The arrival of one individual, by thawing the ice-bound nature of the family, made Miss St. Clair for a short time the happiest, and for many succeeding years the most miserable, of her sex.

Egerton was handsome, well-bred, had great talents, and a highly-cultivated mind: it need not be added that he was poor,—his situation as tutor to Mr. St. Clair sufficiently proved that calamity. His birth was that of a gentleman, being the son of a clergyman whose family had once been distinguished: but that was a tale of other days. Egerton was only twenty when, it becoming absolutely necessary that the heir of St. Clair Abbey should know something beyond firing at a target, he was selected for the purpose of instructing him, and became from his necessities, as regarded income, an inmate of a society which, however morally and intellectually deficient, had over it that gloss which the good-breeding of persons of rank de-

cidedly gives, and which is often preferred, especially by the young, to qualities of more intrinsic value.

Egerton knew little of society but in his college, and his acquaintance with females was extremely limited, being confined to the very few who frequented his father's parsonage. When, therefore, he found himself associated with such a being as Miss St. Clair, then first opening into a form of perfect loveliness, it seemed to him that he was in a dream; he watched her agile step, listened to the music of her voice, and observed the quick glancing of her eye, till, ashamed of his own feelings, he would rush to his pupil and his books, determined to forget in the obtuseness of the one, and the abstruseness of the other, the wild imaginations which were beginning to find place in his heart.

It has been already mentioned that Miss St. Clair was fifteen when Egerton entered the family. Though full-grown, and to every appearance a woman, she was called a child, and her province was the school-room. To that room, of course, Egerton had free access; and over the governess's fire did he gradually draw the mind of Miss St. Clair from the common-place fetters in

which it was bound, and lead her to contemplations of a very different and superior nature. He chose her books, and encouraged her to read; he assisted her in the cultivation of foreign languages, and gave her, far better than all, ideas of generosity and benevolence, which no one before had ever even hinted at to her, and much less brought forward as rules of conduct for this world and the next.

That Mr. Egerton should walk out with the young ladies and their governess was nothing extraordinary in the eyes of Lady St. Clair, who took it for granted that Miss Adams was trying to catch the young man for herself—a piece of presumption, in her ladyship's opinion, with whom Egerton was a great favourite, that could not be sufficiently ridiculed.

Miss St. Clair had already made two campaigns, as they are termed, in London, when the discovery of her love took place. During that period her character remained precisely in the form her lover had moulded it. Her family, even when he had ceased to exist, either in the world or at St. Clair Abbey, never regained her to their school; their treatment added to her contempt, and, but for the knowledge that her presence was disagreeable, she would probably have

avoided them for the remainder of her life. Her annual visits were more to find food for censure and dislike, than from any other pleasure she received, and to enjoy the satisfaction of being the general confidant to all their discontents and complaints. As she rarely spoke a good word for any one, all were secure of her as a ready listener to the various petty griefs which are gendered in families, and which no partiality towards the aggressors was ever likely to make her betray or contradict.

Still, two of her name did, spite of herself, gain an interest in her affection; and whatever portion of the milk of human kindness lingered about her heart, was, as far as relations were concerned, almost entirely engrossed by Edward and Ellen. To those bearing no affinity she was more lavish of that precious quality; but it was more in charity than love—more readily granted to poverty and misfortune, than even to virtue and wisdom.

Two months glided away with a swiftness which had never been experienced by Miss St. Clair in her solitary dwelling; which swiftness was rather a source of annoyance to Edward, as drawing nearer

to that period when it would be necessary for him to repair to London in the prosecution of his profession. Neither of her parents had taken the slightest notice of various letters which, contrary to her husband's wishes, Ellen had from time to time addressed to them.

Mrs. Willis had acknowledged the receipt of hers indeed; but her answer was penned, in deference to Lord and Lady St. Clair's opinions, with all the bitterness of wrath at the impropriety of their conduct, and desired never to hear from them again. This injunction was no great drawback to the happiness of the lovers, and to Miss St. Clair it afforded a positive source of enjoyment. In the society of her niece and nephew she was getting almost into good humour with the world, and perhaps with her own family; this letter, therefore, was most acceptable, as preventing so unnatural a state of things, and in the outpourings of her spleen against the epistle and its writer, she found vent for a deposit of that article, which had not been required as regarded her present companions.

As far as Mrs. Willis was concerned, Ellen cared little as to what was said; but nothing

could induce her to countenance, by a single word or smile, any imputations against her parents, when they were the subject of her aunt's censure. That she did not openly defend them, arose from her knowledge of the other's humour, which could little bear contradiction, particularly when indulging her favourite acrimonious style of discourse. It might also be added, that Ellen could not bring forward any proofs that Lord and Lady St. Clair were otherwise than selfish and overbearing: all she knew was, that they were her parents, whom she had been taught to honour and obey; and that having failed in the latter part of her duty towards them, was no reason why she should do so in the former instance also.

"When a woman marries," said Miss St. Clair one day to her niece, "she leaves father and mother, and cleaves to her husband: you need not therefore think the loss of your parents' favour as a matter of such very great distress. Supposing yourself the wife of a foreign minister, treading in the same steps as your sister the marchioness, you would see nothing of your parents, hear little, and, perhaps, ultimately caring less about them, forget them entirely."

"My parents, however, have been always kind to me," said Ellen, "and though now angry with, they will never cease to care about me; and in whatever station I might be, I should never cease to remember their former kindness."

"That they care little about you, and are perfectly happy at St. Clair Abbey, you may be assured from the fact of the house having been a constant scene of festivity and hilarity since your departure. I hear, through the respectable medium of my maid, the whole history of all their gaieties. Your cousin Ernest is everything with your father, just as Edward was; and that horrid yellow-haired sister of his has been constantly riding on your horse."

"On Ellen's horse!" exclaimed Edward—"impossible! My dear aunt, you must be mistaken; my uncle could never have had the cruelty——"

Miss St. Clair, albeit unused to the smiling mood, could scarcely refrain from laughing at her nephew's warmth. Interrupting him, she exclaimed — "Cruelty! O men, men, what are ye! Whilst you pass over without complaint the transfer of protection and affection, you look upon

the transfer of a horse as an act to call down the fire from heaven !"

" My not complaining is no proof that I do not feel every other misfortune, though more on my wife's account than my own. But that Ellen's horse, which was considered her own, and which fed out of her hand, should be mounted by another Miss Clair, and in the person of so atrocious a horsewoman as I know Anne to be, I allow, stings me to the quick : I would not go to St. Clair Abbey to see such profanation, even if they asked me."

" You need be under no alarm — they will never ask you. I told you how it would be from the first — I prophesied all that has happened. I know them well, those charming St. Clairs ! and his lordship in particular. I can well remember," said Miss St. Clair in a thicker voice, " when *he* who first woke some good feeling in my ill-directed mind tried in vain on my brother's callous breast. If *he* failed, who was to succeed ? — I well remember the blushes which flushed my cheeks at witnessing his abortive efforts to instil the feelings of a man, much more those of a gentleman, into one

boasting the proud name and blood of St. Clair, —when he, his preceptor, poor, low-born, yet rich in every mental qualification. ..... But what matters it my saying what *he was?* — his mind, poverty, sorrows, and abilities, have long been at rest in the grave — have long been forgotten by all but one!"

The middle of January was the term fixed for Edward and Ellen's departure for London. A friend of his had secured for them a reasonable lodging in that quarter of the metropolis mostly patronised by the aspirants to legal fame. The day was settled and the post-horses ordered. Miss St. Clair insisted upon her nephew accepting from her a bank bill of £100. Necessitous as he was, it was with much repugnance that he received the generous gift, though tendered to him in a manner that would render his refusal almost offensive. As to Ellen, who never considered self, and had always a heart open to the sorrows of others, such bounty was positively painful, being in her eyes a robbery of the poor and needy: for though rather indiscriminate as to persons, and very often ungracious in her manner, yet the greater part of

Miss St. Clair's income was expended in charity; and whilst frugal with regard to herself, she was often the positive saviour of the poor, both in mind as well as body, as she generally permitted herself the privilege of bestowing, together with more substantial benefits, that of good counsel; which good counsel, with such accompaniments, had often the advantage of being remembered, and, in her instance, truths constantly heard from the pulpit, and, alas! as constantly unheeded or forgotten, came with greater effect conveyed with such adjuncts as food, clothing, and fuel.

The morning dawned on which Edward and Ellen were to quit this peaceful abode, and bid farewell to their eccentric, though not unamiable relative. They were seated with her to eat their last meal together. All were sad — Miss St. Clair was more depressed than she cared to own, or even to show, at losing those who had contrived to find access to her withered heart, and had given her a taste for society which, for twenty years before their arrival, she had hourly congratulated herself upon being independent of. Veiled as they were, Ellen understood her aunt's feelings. She felt for her —

and she felt for herself in quitting so peaceful a roof, beneath which she had experienced so much kindness from its owner. Of the fears which cast an anxious shade over Edward's brow, she knew nothing — of the value or want of money she was alike ignorant.

Ellen only imagined poverty could be felt by those who esteemed luxury as essential to existence; but the poverty which curtails the common necessaries of life, was a calamity she imagined all well-born persons, however poor, must yet be far removed from. Her husband's experience of the world made him entertain very different sentiments, and as he spread the butter on his roll, his thoughts darted forward into that futurity, which, dark as it appeared, he yet dreaded to arrive at a more intimate knowledge of, for fear that the present prospect, though somewhat veiled to his eyes by a sombre shade, should on nearer inspection prove to be still more lugubrious. The smallness of his income was now about to be felt, and the trials of life to begin!

The entrance of the old servant with the daily letter-bag aroused the party from their medita-

tions. The newspaper was generally the most valuable part of the important bag's contents, but this day there also appeared a letter to "Edward St. Clair, Esq." Some ominous flourishes in the direction gave a very sinister aspect to the epistle, which Edward, with a heightened colour, tore hastily open, inwardly exclaiming, "So my troubles are already begun!"

In a moment, however, the expression of his countenance changed — his eye brightened, and a smile played on his lip. His wife, who had anxiously observed everything from the prior look of distress to the present air of content, now eagerly inquired what the letter contained. Edward waited no further questioning, and read aloud—

"Sir,

"We have the honour to inform you that we received this morning the sum of five hundred pounds to be placed to your account, and we are desired to state that the same sum will be paid every first day of January.

"We have also been particularly requested to add, that the person from whom this money

proceeds has given strict injunctions that his name should be concealed.

"We have the honour to be,

"&c. &c."

It would be impossible to describe the astonishment and delight of Edward, his wife and aunt, at the contents of this letter. For a little time nothing was heard but expressions of congratulation and pleasure.

"My dear, dear papa! how very, very kind!" at length Mrs. St. Clair found sufficient pause from the noisy delight of the two others to exclaim, whilst the tears stood in her eyes.

"Your papa, child! what has he to do with your good fortune?" inquired Miss St. Clair sharply.

"Oh, it must be my papa," replied Ellen; "I knew he would not forget us, he could not cast us off for ever. I have told you so a thousand times, Edward, have I not? It is not the possession of the money gives me pleasure—it is the satisfaction of knowing papa still thinks of his little Ellen."

"As to that," said Miss St. Clair, with a

chagrined air, as if the supposition of Lord St. Clair being the benefactor took very much away in her eyes from the merit of the performance—"as to its being St. Clair or not, I am sure I cannot tell: all I can say is, that I never knew him act upon the rule of not letting his left hand know what his right hand doeth;—with him, on the contrary, the sounding of a trumpet according to the fashion of the pharisees, in order to have glory of men, was much more characteristic: I therefore do not believe my brother to be the author of your good fortune."

"What say you then of aunt Willis?" said Edward, laughing.

"Why, she is just as likely as St. Clair."

"My dear aunt, whether according to our ideas of his character or not, there can be no doubt of Lord St. Clair being the person—indeed I should be very sorry to think otherwise, for I should be scrupulous in receiving such a sum annually from any but him."

"Oh, if you have any qualms of conscience in that respect, pray let them repose in the belief that Lord St. Clair is your benefactor. For the honour of the St. Clairs, I wish that I could be

equally credulous — but I neither can nor will. You must have some bountiful godfather or godmother — or we will suppose majesty itself has been worked upon by some sentimental favourite to befriend two distressed lovers! or Arthur has been left a fortune—anything will I believe, rather than credit your supposition."

"It is in vain to seek further than Lord St. Clair—the sum itself speaks volumes; it evidently must proceed from an individual of fortune. I know none, save him, who have the power to act in the same manner, whatever their inclinations might be. Though angry at our disobedience, he evidently does not wish to cast us off entirely; he does not intend us to starve whilst awaiting the period he has ordained for us to be received into favour."

"Of his merciful character there can be no question, nor of that of any of his tribe," said Miss St. Clair, sneeringly; but as she saw that her niece and nephew were more happy in the giver than the gift, and rather hurt that the first should be questioned, she pressed her opinion no further.

In a short time the carriage was announced. Edward now gently hinted to his aunt that, under

his present improved circumstances, he could not think of retaining her hundred pounds. Miss St. Clair laughed at his disinterestedness.

"Why, my dear Edward, you forget that your windfall is only five hundred pounds: whenever this unknown genius, or beneficent fairy of yours converts the five hundred into five thousand a year, then you may repay me my hundred pounds; till then, do me the favour of spending it in bonnets for your wife, and coats for yourself. Adieu, children! remember you have an old aunt who will be always happy to see you—whose heart and home will ever be open to you in sunshine or gloom; and let me tell you, that had such a speech been made to me when I was of your age—had I then imagined there was one human being in the world who took an interest in my fate, or who could feel for me when my heart was breaking, I yet, without being happy, might have known less misery."

"My dear aunt, it is not now too late—you must leave Scotland and come with us to London—you are not so wedded to this place."

"Poor Ellen! a happy task indeed you would be imposing upon yourself!—and a happy figure

I should make—a misanthropical antediluvian following in the suite of two turtle-doves!—No, my dear child, I do very well where I am—I am of some use to the poor, and, as poor Cowper said before me, 'It is the place of all others I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself, and with the least inconvenience to others.'"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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